REDSKIN

ELIZABETH PICKETT

FORREST HUNTER.
DALE BEEBE.

50¢
SKRENDA

REDSKIN

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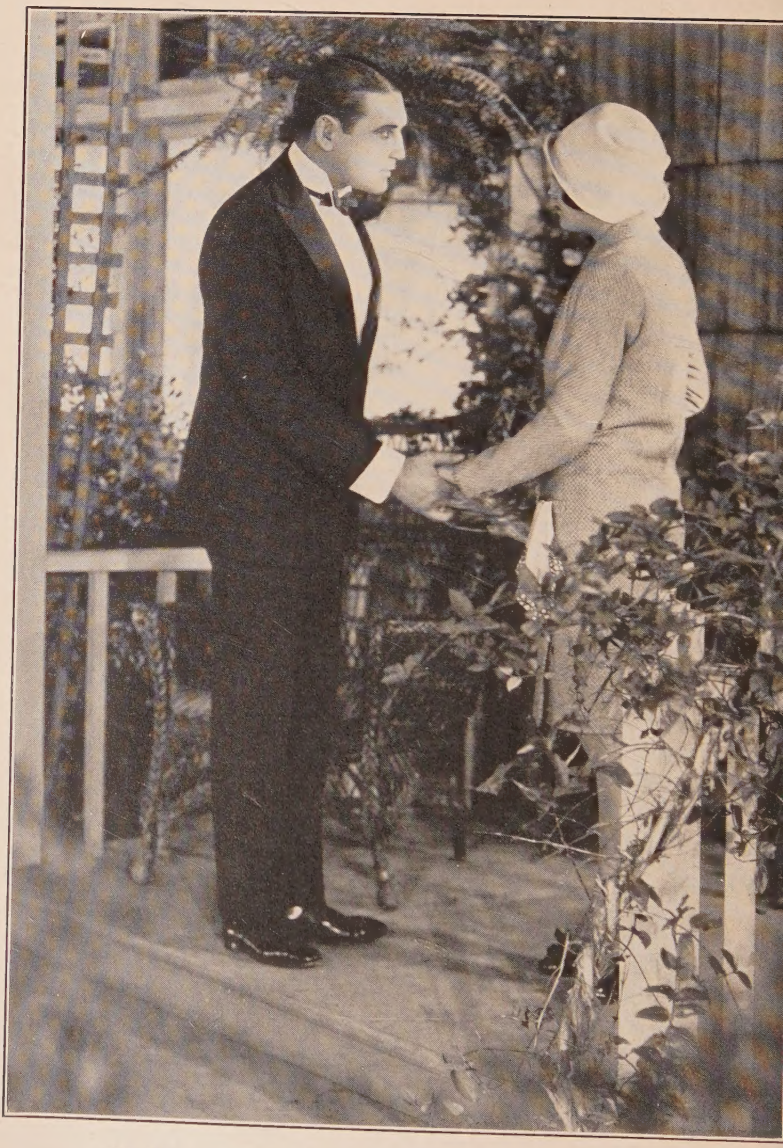

"I MUST LEAVE COLLEGE AND GO BACK TO THE RESERVATION. MY FATHER IS ILL."

A Paramount Picture.

REDSKIN

BY

ELIZABETH PICKETT

ILLUSTRATED WITH SCENES
FROM THE PARAMOUNT PICTURE

RICHARD DIX
GLADYS BELMONT

GROSSET & DUNLAP
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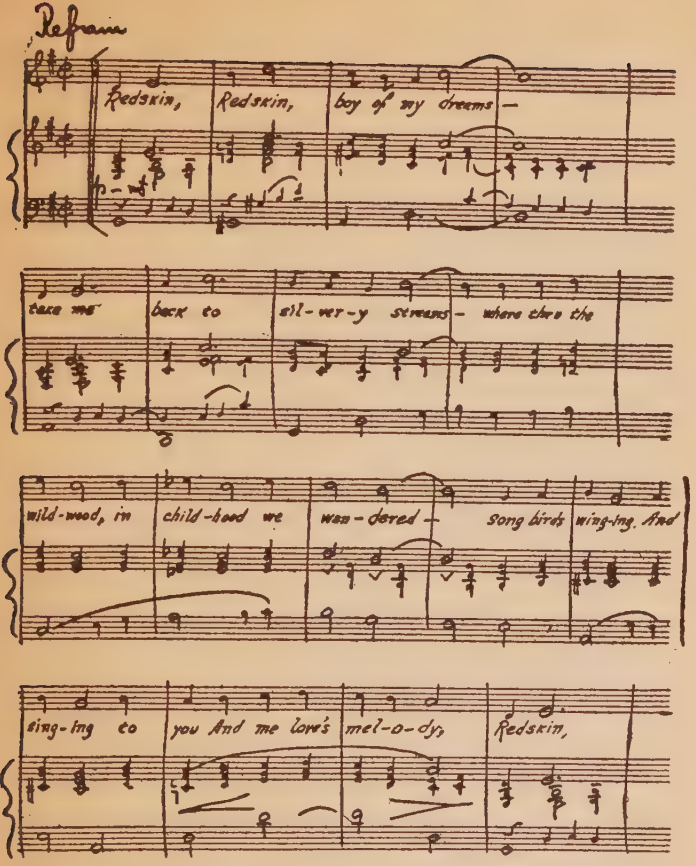
TO MY MOTHER

J. S. Zamecnik, well-known composer and specialist in writing musical accompaniments for De Luxe Photoplay Productions, has done the exceptionally fine musical score for the motion picture "Redskin". Most of the compositions of the score are originals by Mr. Zamecnik, including the theme number "Redskin", an excerpt of which is shown on the opposite page. It has taken months to prepare the "Redskin" score. Many trained musicians worked constantly under the supervision of Mr. Zamecnik. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Mr. Zamecnik went abroad after completing a thorough American musical training, and studied under Dr. Anton Dvorak at the Prague Conservatory.

Later the composer returned to this country and since 1913 has been writing specialized motion picture music. His work won immediate recognition. Today Mr. Zamecnik enjoys the highest favor in both motion picture and high musical circles, for the exceptional quality of his offerings.

Besides the "Redskin" score, Mr. Zamecnik has also done for the Famous Motion Pictures, "Wings" and "Old Ironsides". These books are also published by Grosset & Dunlap.


Refrain
Redskin, Redskin, boy of my dreams —
take me back to sil-ver-y streams — where thro the
wild-wood, in child-hood we wan-dered — song birds wing-ing. And
sing-ing co you And me love's mel-o-dy, Redskin,

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PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION
OF THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT
OF "REDSKIN" BY J. S. ZAMECNIK

Refrain

Redskin, Redskin, boy of my dreams
Take me back to silvery streams,
Where thru the wild wood,
In childhood we wandered,
Song birds winging, and singing
To you and me loves melody
Redskin, Redskin, let us return
Where bright twilight welcome fires burn.
With happy hearts we'll go roaming,
I'll whisper in the gloaming,
I love you, Redskin, love you.

Dawn steals thru the valley
As the lone stars fade and depart
Day brings only mem'ries
Of the dreams that fill my heart.

REDSKIN

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

Navajo Jim Morris, U. S. licensed Indian trader, came to the doorway of his trading-post at Cheelan, Arizona, and stood gazing discontentedly about him at the Navajo settlement over which he ruled. It was early afternoon of a hot July day in 1910.

The Trading-Post was the only white man's dwelling at Cheelan. Out of the wind-ridged sand at the mouth of the Canyon of Chelly it rose, a long sand-stone store with iron-barred windows and numerous pioneer-like log outbuildings. In front, the vast canyon which runs like a red scar across the Navajo Backcountry, opened up from the sandy wash. On the right, a single rutted Reservation trail curved down from Gallup across the yard of the Post, and went meandering up the baked-brown hills on the left toward the open desert lands, the vari-lined Backcountry which

stretched its infinity of sage-brush and sand, dull-gold and purple lavender, to the far high shoulders of the San Francisco Peaks.

As he stood gazing out across the heat-shimmer, the thought struck Navajo Jim with renewed force that he had never really been happy in Cheelan, although he had been running the Trading-Post there for fifteen years. Deep in his sentimental heart, he had always cherished an idea that Destiny held something in store for him more heroic than trading sleazy calico with Indian squaws for finely-woven vivid blankets, or swapping sacks of tobacco for hand-clipped wool.

In his clothes and manner of speech, Navajo Jim fairly radiated the Old West. High-heeled boots and silver spurs adorned his feet, and tight sheep-skin chaps his ludicrous bow legs. A red shirt, as close a match to the scarlet tunics worn by the old Texas Rangers as he could buy, covered his skinny chest and shoulders. His face was long and gaunt, with a red hawk nose and deep-lined cheeks coarsened by desert sun and wind. From under long black brows peered eyes of twinkling brown mildness, that gave the lie directly to his fiercely-drooping black mustachios.

Navajo Jim had come to Cheelan with the first white man, the newly-appointed U. S. Government Agent to the Navajo Tribe, and

had seen their would-be wards murder his companion within three weeks of their arrival. "In them days, after the troops left," the trader often observed, "a man lived on in Cheelan accordin' to his shootin' powers." Although reputed as a person remarkably quick with his hands in this respect, Navajo Jim rarely exhibited any skill in letter-writing. He boasted that he had never been in a school house "exceptin' when he run in one durin' a raid," nor in a hospital "exceptin' when they took him thar unconscious with a bullet in his lungs."

Navajo-Jim sat down on a broken-bottom chair, teetered back against the log walls of the Post, and pulled his black mustache in utter ennui. He looked disconsolately at the dozen or more Navajo ponies tethered under the cotton-wood trees at the corner of the rough-hewn pinon-pole fence. Others stood with hanging chin-straps which flecked unshod hooves as they nipped occasionally for a horse-gnat or too insistent blue-bottle. The road, the pale shade of the gnarled old trees, the worn threshold of the Post were deserted except for two comely Navajo girls sitting on the bench across the doorway. The front of the settlement slumbered in the intense light of the desert afternoon.

Seeing the girls, Navajo Jim pulled out his

redoubtable old 33, and opened fire on his customary target, a cigarette stub upthrust in a tomato can filled with sand. Off spattered the blackened ash. The Navajo girls giggled appreciatively. Jim cocked a wicked brown eye toward them, and with a broad flourish, pulled the trigger again. Silence followed, the cigarette-stub remained impudently upthrust in the tomato can. A louder giggle issued from the Navajo audience. With an apologetic grin, Jim slid the untrustworthy weapon into his holster. Laughing outright, the slim bronze girls got up, and in their voluminous bright calico skirts went swishing around the corner of the Post. His audience had walked out on Navajo Jim.

A movement near the pinon fence attracted Jim's sheepish eye. Flattened against the poles, an Indian in rags came sidling cautiously toward the door. Jim swung down to meet him as the newcomer dodged into the shadow of the threshold. With a quick glance at the man's torn clothes and hunted face, Jim jumped to his feet.

"Why, you're from Acoma!" he exclaimed, excitedly, "Are you crazy—coming on the Navajo Reservation?"

Touching his heat-cracked lips, the Acoma Indian handed Jim a buckskin pouch, and turned his blood-shot eyes pleadingly toward

the *olla* of water hanging in the cool gloom of the doorway. Jim opened the bag, raised one bushy eye in surprise over the contents,—valuable antique turquoise and silver jewelry—and nodded.

"This here junk ain't hardly worth a drink of water," he said, "but help yerself, anyhow. I'd do that much for a coyote—an' an Injun's jus' about the same thing."

Too exhausted to resent the insult even if he understood it, the hunted Acoma man raised the *olla,* and gulped down the water thirstily. With a compassionate look, Jim turned into the Post, and returned with a loaf of bread, a can of coffee and a handful of dried mutton. In Navajo Jim's heart a battle was being constantly waged between the trader's soft-hearted kindliness toward the Redmen and his keen trader's instinct to cheat them out of everything of value which they possessed. Offering the Acoma Indian the quarter's worth of food, Jim's eyes gleamed shrewdly. The fugitive protested with hands and uttered grunts.

"All right, all right, take another drink of water, then!" cried Jim, big-heartedly, "I don't want to cheat yuh."

While the Acoma man was pouring the life-giving fluid into a horse-medicine bottle, which he produced from his tattered breeches, tom-toms began to throb behind the Post. In a

wave of fantastic sound, drums and voices chanting sing-song harmonies came sweeping into their ears like surf curling on some prehistoric pagan beach when the world was young. Ebb and flow—ebb and flow—rose the weird melodies and pulsing drums, as if the vast ageless Heart of the Indian Country had suddenly given voice to its sorrows, wailing its lament for the passing of the Redman from this mighty silent land of the eagle and the coyote.

At the sound, the Acoma fugitive tilted his head.

"Big sand-painting and sing—who for?" he asked, piously.

An expression of genuine sympathy passed quickly across Jim's eyes.

"It's been goin' on fer two days now, fer the chief's wife," he answered, sadly. "She's awful sick—dyin', they say."

With a thoughtful expression, the Acoma Indian pocketed his bottle of water, and dodged away toward the Backcountry whence he had come. Jim rose, thrust the pouch of jewelry into his pocket, hitched up his breeches, cocked his hat jauntily over one ear and strolled around the corner of the store.

Behind the out-buildings of the Trading-Post squatted the Navajo settlement. Supported by oak logs and plastered over with red-brown

clay, the hogans rose out of the hillside like huge inverted birds' nests. In front of the biggest hogan sat a circle of Navajo men, wrapped in grey blankets shot with zig-zag flashes of red and brown. Their motionless figures resembled the gaudy rocks that rose here and there from the floor of the Canyon wash. Their hands rested passively on their knees. Their copper faces, with high cheek-bones, hawk noses and eyes narrowed for protection against the sand-laden wind, were as calm, as remote from human anxiety as the eagle that swung in circles now against the cobalt sky, now against the columns of clouds piled on the horizon.

In the middle of the circle danced Chahi, Navajo medicine man. Loosely thrown over his gaunt body he wore a robe of brown feathers studded with turquoise and cut in long fringes that flapped about his bony ankles. Two eagle feathers were twisted into his greying hair. About his neck hung ropes of silver jewelry, of pale shells and coral beads, of bleached and jagged sparrows' bones, of tiny whitened skulls of birds in which the dried brains rattled as he moved.

Chahi, the medicine man, was making a *Yebechi* sand-painting. For twenty-two hours he had been singing and dancing the sacred healing ceremony, to drive away the Evil Ones who had come for the soul of Hatquila-Nadloi,

the Laughing Singer, wife of Hastin Notani, Chief of the Cheelan Navajos. With a shout that sank into a minor wail, he would crouch down beside the intricate design on the ground and let escape through his finger tips a stream of brightly-dyed sand. A trickle of red grains formed geometric figures of a Sheman god. Blue sand spread into triangular cloud symbols. Yellow particles formed stalks of corn and golden ears. Rays of brown sprang out from the central God-figure, and serpentined through the maize plants to melt into the dark borders. The medicine man was making a *Yebechi* legend of the Beginnings of Life, to give courage and strength to the sick one.

Like surf on the beach, the chant beat against the buffalo hide which hung at the entrance to the hogan. Within, Hatquali-Nadloi on a heap of snowy Angora sheep-skins. Beside her, crouched Yina, her aged mother. At her head knelt a witch-like medicine woman, who rocked back and forth and occasionally flung a handful of holy herbs into the fire, causing a spiral of thin blue smoke to rise straight up through the opening in the roof.

As if to brush away the sound of the *Yebechi* song, Hatquali-Nadloi raised her slim bronze hand. Yina leaned forward, but the medicine woman's claw-like fingers closed over the girl's hand first, and forced it down again upon the

fleece hide. Feverishly Hatquila-Nadloi's eyes roved about the dwelling. She saw the smoke-blackened dirt walls hung with saddles, with strings of dried red peppers and striped corn, with blankets and gourds, with sheep-skins, jerked mutton and weapons. Across from the fire stood a loom with a half-finished blanket on the warp, and the shuttle thrust into the wool as she had left it. It was a chief's blanket, and down the center ran the proud black stripes of Navajo leadership. With the dulled feeling of the mortally sick, Hatquali-Nadloi wondered if she would ever live to finish and hang it about her son's proud shoulders.

Though her body shot a flash of pain. Yina leaned over and wiped the sweat of agony from her daughter's brow. Hatquali-Nadloi recognized her.

"So you have returned, my mother?" She smiled up at her. "And the White Healer, she comes soon now?"

Over her daughter's head Yina looked questioningly at the medicine woman. The seeress put her fingers to her toothless lips. Hatquali-Nadloi seemed to sense the meaning of their glances.

"You mean she will not come?" she faltered.

"Nay, hush thee, Slender One!" soothed the medicine woman, using the ancient Navajo

words, "Outside they sing for thee and thy son —soon all will be well."

"No—no!" cried the sick girl, and half raised herself on her elbow, "I want the nurse —I want the White Healer from Chaco, where I went to school!"

Desperate with pain and fear, the girl's eyes turned toward the entrance of the hogan. Through the low arch, she saw outside the sunlight shining on the sand, the clumps of pale lavender sage, the circle of men as they sat swinging in rhythm to the *Yebechi* song. Then her gaze narrowed to a Navajo, a tall spare figure wrapped in a chief's blanket, who stood aloof from the circle.

"Notani—my husband!" she called, in anguish.

At the sound of her voice the young chief turned, but the medicine man drew him over toward the sand-painting.

"Wait, my son!" he said, "Even now the *Yebechi* would speak to me."

Kneeling, the old priest began to trace with shaking fingers the mystic symbols of the sand-painting. Under his bent forearm he glanced toward the entrance of the hogan. The medicine woman had emerged, and stood in the doorway. With a movement of her claw-like hand, she pointed directly toward the medicine man.

"What say the *Yebechi,* O Wise One?" impatiently asked the young chief.

"They say," began the medicine man impressively, "They say that even now a son is born to you."

"But my woman?" Notani demanded, "Do the *Yebechi* even now defend her from the Evil Ones?"

A hush fell over the Indians, and they stood motionless, as if turned again into columns of sandstone. Once more the medicine man knelt and put out his trembling fingers to trace the colored symbols of the sand-painting. Under his arm, he glanced slyly toward the hogan door. The medicine woman had reappeared with a bundle of sheepskins in her arms. As she met the eyes of the medicine man, she stooped, picked up a handful of gravel and let it sift slowly through her fingers.

"Speak, Chahi!" Notani's voice rang out imperiously. "How fares my woman?"

"For the new life, Impatient One!" cried the medicine man, "For the new life, the *Yebechi* demand the old!" He paused, and his hands moved in a magic circle above the sand-painting. "Your woman will die!" he finished, sharply.

Notani turned away. Passing the medicine woman without a glance toward the bundle of sheepskins, he entered the hogan and knelt be-

fore his young wife. At his approach, Yina cried out in alarm, pulled her blanket over her head and crouched at her daughter's feet. Laughing Singer turned her beautiful eyes toward her husband. As she felt Notani's arm under her shoulders, she smiled. Knowing her hour had come, her hand fluttered to her throat, then dropped to the strands of fine turquoise beads which lay on her laboring breast.

"Give my baby these—" she said, weakly, "Tell him I will come to him—in his need."

At the faltering words, Yina threw off the blanket and raised her clasped hands toward Notani in desperate appeal.

"Look, she is dying!" Yina cried, with the courage born of despair, "Ride to the white man's school, Notani—bring back the nurse!"

With a quick glance of superstitious disapproval, Notani swung around so that he could not see the crouching supplicant.

"You know Chahi forbids!" he answered, sternly, "Cover your face, lest you anger the Holy Ones!"

Turning back to his wife, Notani raised her higher in his arms to meet Death. Outside the hogan, the Navajos waited and listened. The drums were racing now like the laboring heart within. The medicine woman stood by the hogan door, forgotten. To the right sat the or-

chestra, chanting louder and shaking their rattles fiercely to frighten off the Evil Ones hovering over the dying one within. To the left sat rows of Navajo women. Their faces frightened, their hands nervously fingering beads, calico dress, or the gravel beneath them. Several were whispering among themselves, voicing their fear with awed glances toward the hogan where already the grim Courtier watched.

A woman's shriek rose sharply above the *Yebechi* music. It was greeted by an immediate hush. Drums, voices, dancing stopped—everyone held his breath. Again the sobbing wail of the Navajo woman in sorrow came from the hogan. At the sound, an old woman outside took it up, then another. A young wife held her own baby fiercely to her heart, a betrothed maiden shivered. One by one, the Navajo women pulled their blankets over their heads, and took up the lament from within, rocking back and forth and striking hands and foreheads on the flinty ground.

Within the hogan Notani Nabahi knelt beside his wife. The girl on the sheep-skins lay quietly now, with her long black lashes sweeping her golden cheeks. At her feet the old mother rocked back and forth with the age-old motion of sorrow.

"Oh, Notani, my son!" she wailed, her face hidden, "If only I had been permitted to bring the white woman who heals!"

Without answering her, Notani placed his right hand on his heart and outward over the body, palm downward, in the stately Navajo salute. Then he raised his blanket level to his forehead, and strode out of the hogan.

Outside, Chahi and the Navajo council waited. To their straining ears came the pad-pad of the medicine woman's feet as she shuffled through the sand. Into their circle she moved, and on her outstretched arms she carried the bundle of sheep-skins. The men stepped back so that she stood alone before Chahi.

"A son—born of his mother's death!" she cried, harshly, "A new life—for the old!"

Chahi tossed back the fleece. On the snowy wool lay a beautiful baby boy who kicked his bronze heels high into the air, and laughed. Chahi's parchment-like face broke into a smile.

"Wing Foot!" he cried, "So shall you be known, until you can with honor earn a prouder name!"

As he concluded, Chahi's hand went to his heart and outward, in the ancient salute of the Tribe.

"*Yat-tay,* Navajo—Wing Foot!" came a ringing cry from the assembled Navajos.

"*Yat-tay,* Navajo—chief's son!" others shouted, and "Navajo—Chief's son!" came the thin, far echoes bounding softly back.

Gathering about the medicine man, the Indians pushed, jostled and slapped each other for a glance at their future leader. Above the general clamor rang several questions:

"Oh, Wise One!"

"Did the *Yebechi* whisper it was a boy?"

"What Evil Spirit told you she must die?"

Smilingly, the old priest pointed down to the sand-painting and acknowledged their tributes with easy grace. The rows of Navajo women rose, and entered the hogan. Their flat bronze faces impassive, their calico skirts brushing the dust into the dead girl's face, they began to dismantle the dwelling. From the hogan they carried the fleeces, the hides, the saddles, the pots and pans, the strings of maize and peppers, the bundles of fagots. By the time Notani came back with a pony harnessed between two poles, the hogan was empty, the fire dead.

The young chief strode inside. With long slashing strokes of his knife, he cut the half-finished blanket from the great loom, and spread it over the body of his wife. Very carefully he wrapped the dead woman in its glowing folds, picked up the bundle and carried it outside. Laying it between the two poles, he lashed the body stoutly as in a hammock to the

whitened pinon trunks. His task done, he stood up and looked toward the hogan.

The Navajo men had boarded up, were sealing the entrance to his house. Never again would it know the warmth of fire-light, the chatter of women's voices. Notani listened as the spade-fulls of earth fell dully against the planks. Then the men stepped back, their work completed.

From among the ring of silent Navajos, Chahi moved forward. In chalk on the doorway, he made the Sign of the Dead,—a human figure lying face downward, hands and arms stretched to the Lower World of Lamentation. Notani walked with slow steps to his pony's head. Hand on the bridle, he led the little animal from the sun-baked settlement toward the canyon, which the sunset light was now turning to hues of maroon and purple and gold. A lonely silhouette against the flaming sky, the solitary figures of man and funeral-pony moved away to a remote grave on the canyon rim. Far in the rear, with her blanket thrown over her head, stumbled old Yina, the mother.

Before the accursed hogan, the Council was breaking up. Chahi and the medicine men wiped out the sand-painting. Jim, the trader, sidled cautiously over to where the medicine woman still stood with the two-day-old infant. Taking fleece and baby into his arms, he

cuddled the orphan tenderly to his heart.

"You pore little devil!" he whispered softly, confident that the Navajos could not understand the English words. "Yer Maw shouldn't have been let to die like that—of witch-doctorin' and neglect!"

As he concluded, Jim's lanky forefinger stole forward and tickled the baby playfully. Wing Foot crowed, and kicked his heels again. Chahi stepped forward swiftly. Reaching out jealous arms, he took the baby from the trader and turned away toward the medicine hogan.

High on the canyon rim, Notani buried his young wife, she whose Navajo name meant "the Laughing Singer." Over the grave he heaped gaudy-colored stones of the desert, which the sunlight light seemed to turn into bright flower hues. When the cairn was secure against the coyotes, Notani took the chin-strap of the funeral pony, and turned away.

Down the painted flank of Canyon du Chelly, man and horse wound slowly back to Cheelan. The sunset faded, the twilight deepened, the moon rose over the mesa. Against the great silver disc, the cairn stood in black silhouette with old Yina kneeling beside it. Within the medicine hogan, a new-born child whimpered and cried in an old priest's arms.

CHAPTER II

The world of an Indian baby is limited to the smoky circle of the hogan. Within this charmed area, he may crawl from the pile of sheep-skins on which he was born, to the fire; to the skirts of his mother as she sits at the loom; and back again to the fire and the sheep-skins. Not a large world, to be sure, but pleasant enough with its constant click of shuttle and many women's tongues; with its savory smells of the boiling pot; with its enticing glimpses of the sunlit or snowy world which lay beyond the buffalo hide hung up across the door.

Since the death of Hatquali-Nadloi six years before, and his second marriage three months later, Notani Nabahi had shown little interest in Wing Foot, his first-born. The child spent his days entirely in the hogan of Yina, his grandmother. With eyes shining like jet buttons in his copper face, he surveyed the world from her billowing petticoats. His playthings were a fat puppy, an occasional beetle or spider, and a worn old primer with amazing black

symbols and drawings in it which resembled familiar objects of everyday life, a horse or calf or rabbit. Whenever he questioned Old Yina about their meaning, her eyes grew soft with tenderness.

"Your mother called it a book," Yina explained to the wondering child on her knee, "She brought it from the great red hogans at Fort Defiance. She was the first Navajo girl to learn to read and write—I helped her run away to school."

"Why?"

"I wanted her to know the good ways of the white man," answered Yina, with a cautious glance about her. "Sometimes I wish the white man would take you, too, Eaglet."

"But the white man eats little Indians!" cried the child, timorously, "Chahi told me so—"

"Hush!"

A shadow had fallen across the door. Visibly excited, Notani strode into the hogan. At his approach, Yina crouched with arms hiding her face. The chieftain swung Wing Foot off her lap, looked around the hogan for a hiding place and crossed hastily to a pile of clipped wool in the corner.

"Stay there, Wing Foot!" he commanded, in a stern whisper, "It's the white man, from the school."

Turning to Yina, Notani continued:

"If he comes in here, say you haven't seen Wing Foot—understand?"

Yina nodded assent. As the chieftain strode out of the hogan, Wing Foot looked after him. Framed by the buffalo hide which had been flung back over the top of the hogan to sun, the hillside and Post below were visible. From the Gallup road two horsemen were cantering down the hill. Wing Foot watched the riders clatter into the yard before the hogans. One was a tall and slenderly-built man of about twenty-two, dressed in queer brown clothes and glossy boots, mounted on a tall bay horse. The other, an Apache Indian on a mustang, wore civilian clothes which seemed to add to his general uneasiness.

As the newcomers dismounted Notani and two Navajo men strolled over casually to greet them. Wing Foot recognized Man Hammar, his father's friend and councillor. The Navajos appeared indifferent, as if the strangers' visit meant no more to them than a possible opportunity of trade. Wing Foot watched their greetings. As the Apache turned toward Yina's hogan, the Navajos stiffened antagonistically. The white man, his face too far away to be seen distinctly, raised his hand and checked the Apache. Turning to a nearby

hogan, he bent down to tickle the chin of a baby in its mother's arms. Just then, a boy of seven ran out of the hogan, and the white man seized him. A short struggle—the mother's quick scream—indistinct words of explanation, and the white man had swung the child up to the Apache's saddle and was going toward Yina's door.

Terrified, his breath quickening, Wing Foot wiggled back under the wool, and pulled the fleeces over his head. The heat was suffocating, but the child lay motionless. Peering along the uneven earth, Wing Foot saw the shining boots enter the hogan, and cross briskly to the loom where Yina sat weaving.

"Good morning, Granny!" spoke an authoritative voice, in good Navajo, "They told me I'd find Notani's boy here—?"

Yina did not answer, but sent the shuttle clattering against the frame. The clear masculine voice laughed pleasantly.

"You're like the Chinaman, eh, mother—you understand English only when you want to, don't you?" joked the cheerful tones. "Mind if I look around a bit?"

Before the glossy heels could turn, Wing Foot's alert little mind had formulated a new course of action. When the brown boots reached the pile of wool and a muscular arm

swept aside hides and wool, only the fat puppy yawned and scratched himself in the cosy nest. Again, the decisive voice laughed.

"Sorry—guess the joke's on me this time!" it continued. "Here's a peace offering, Granny, for doubting that grunt of yours."

As the cigarette came flying toward the loom, Yina caught it deftly. Stooping, she pulled a fagot from the smouldering fire and lit it, her sharp old eyes fixed intently on the white man's back as he strode out of the hogan. After another minute of crafty watching, the old Navajo woman looked down with a smile. From around her billowing petticoats, Wing Foot thrust his frightened small face. With a surge of emotion, Yina caught the child hungrily to her heart.

A hand gripped her shoulder. Her heart paralyzed with fear, she looked up, and relaxed with relief so acute that it made her body ache. Man Hammar stood above her.

"He's gone. Notani bids you get Wing Foot ready for the Range," the Councilman whispered, "It's not safe to leave him longer in Cheelan."

"But Wing Foot is too young to go with the sheep!" protested Yina, her arms tightening about her beloved small grandson, at this new catastrophe.

"Notani spoke! Do as he bids you."

Man Hammar left the hogan. Yina went to the old hewn cedar chest behind the loom and opened it. Dressing Wing Foot in new velveteen jumper and buckskin trousers, she hung about his neck the long strands of fine matched turquoise and coral shells that had belonged to Laughing Singer. To Wing Foot's eager questions, however, she only grunted: "Do as your father bids!"

"Why does he not come tell us himself?" the child asked, fingering one of the sky-blue beads.

"Hush, Eaglet, the Holy Ones forbid!" answered Yina, piously.

"Why?" asked Wing Foot, and took the jewel out of his mouth.

"The *Yebechi* will put a curse upon me if I gaze on the face of my daughter's man," explained his grandmother.

While she shook out a sheepskin and began to place on it little folded garments and moccasins, the child considered her words. His questions formed at last, he gazed solemnly at his grandmother:

"Which of you has to dodge the other first?"

With a velveteen tunic poised midair, Yina grunted and looked at him. Dropping the garment, she caught the little Indian in her arms.

"Child, child with my daughter's eyes!" she cried, and her old voice quavered and broke.

"When you are gone with the men, you'll forget old Yina, your grandmother!"

Wing Foot put his two hands on her shrunken breasts and leaned back to look at her curiously. With a sigh, she released him and went on with her packing. In the doorway loomed a shadow.

"Wing Foot!"

It was the second time the boy had heard his father's voice. He turned obediently and trotted toward the imperious stranger. Stooping, Notani picked up the child and carried him out of the hogan.

At first glance the sunlight was blinding. Then Wing Foot made out the shifting, furry backs of hundreds of sheep. On wiry ponies, Navajo youths darted here and there. Dogs barked and raced about. Navajo men shouted to each other. From inside the hogan door Wing Foot had once before seen the splendid spectacle of the herds departing for the grazing lands. Now he, too, was to go off to the Range!

Notani walked over to his pony and, with the boy under his arm, swung into the saddle.

"Husband of my child!"

From the hogan, old Yina came hobbling out with the small bundle of Wing Foot's clothing. A Navajo shepherd spurred forward quickly and swung his pony in between the old woman

and the young chief. Notani pulled up his horse.

"Ask the old woman what she wants," he commanded, his face turned away.

With her blanket shielding her eyes, Yina thrust the sheepskin bundle toward the youth. He handed it to Notani, who hooked it onto his saddle-horn. As the chief was gathering up the reins, Yina dropped her blanket and flung herself at his stirrup.

"Notani, you shall not take him!" she cried, her voice desperate with yearning for the Indian child.

Wonderingly, Wing Foot looked up at his father. Notani had put his hand across his eyes so that he could not see the wrinkled face, the pleading eyes, the trembling lips of the old woman at his foot.

"Yina knows I cannot," he answered, quietly, "She knows that if Wing Foot stays longer at Cheelan, the white man will take him. Go back to the hogan, lest the *Yebechi* be angered!"

With the courage of the desperate, Yina flung off her blanket, and gripped Notani's knee. Forgotten were tribal taboos and superstitions before the agony of parting from this beloved man-child of hers.

"Notani, give him back to me!"

Angered, the chieftain looked down. He and

Yina exchanged direct glances. Chahi sprang forward.

"Sacrilege!" he shouted, and flung his medicine robe over Yina's head, "Now, you will go blind!"

Yina released her hold, and dropped on her knees in the sand. The Navajo chief raised his bridle reins, and the restless pony sprang away. Shouts of the shepherds, the barking of dogs, the patter of thousands of small sharp hooves,—and the vast flock was moving off!

With small bronze fists, Wing Foot clung to the pommel, and watched the white flood of sheep stream out across the canyon wash. Under him, he felt the rise and fall of the pony's smooth canter. Squirming about in his father's arms, he looked back toward the hogan. There on the ground where she had fallen, lay his grandmother. Wonderingly he watched as she raised handfuls of sand and poured it down over her own bent head. Occasionally, she pounded her forehead on the rough ground and uttered the long, wailing cry of the Navajo woman in sorrow, but Wing Foot was too young to understand why.

CHAPTER III

The Navajo Backcountry covers thirteen million square acres of scrub-cedar, sage-brush, and sand, of yellow-brown arroyos that boom with spring freshets, of saffron red canyons where each year the silver threads of water cut deeper and deeper into the painted earth.

The Navajo Backcountry and the Navajo shepherd's life breeds only the strong. Wing Foot spent three years with the sheep, and, like a outworn blanket, his baby ways fell from him. Sleeping on the sand, eating in the crisp Arizona air, living in the saddle, he grew into a thin, wiry lad tall for his age, with his blue-black hair held out of his eyes by a scrap of red flannel bound around his forehead, with a laugh on his firmly chiselled lips, and a whip or sling always in nervous hands. To the beauty which Laughing Singer had given him, the desert added strength. Pride he acquired himself, for was he not the first-born of Notani-Nabahi, richest and strongest among the Cheelan Navajos?

At nine years of age, Wing Foot could out-

run, outride, and outshoot with bow and rifle the other boys who lived on the range with the flocks. The sports of the young Navajos included horse racing, furious riding "follow the leader" along the canyon-rims, wrestling, gambling their dried mutton and maize cakes against a lucky spin of their cone-shaped stone dice. Some of the games, such as when they buried a prairie hen to its neck in the sand and rode at it bareback to spear the dodging head, were cruel, but all life in the Backcountry was primitive. If, during the wrestling matches, Wing Foot occasionally rose from the ground with his eyes filled with tears, but his lips still smiling, nothing was said, for had not all the Navajo youths and men themselves gone through the same stern school?

Now and then the boy's quiet life was marked by friendly visits from other shepherds. Once, from his airy perch on the top of a red rock-chimney, he saw a speck flying in a cloud of dust across the mesa. Shading his eyes from the glare, Wing Foot stared at the strange sight. Four wheels it had, like a wagon, but no ponies! Yet it skimmed over the desert floor faster than the fleetest mustang, the most timid coyote.

When Wing Foot returned to the camp which the Cheelan Navajos established every summer under the beautiful prehistoric cliff ruin called

the White House, he found Chahi there, resting from a trip to the Monuments to pray for rain. The old medicine man had spread Notani's chief's blanket on the sand, and was explaining the meaning of its bright-hued symbols to the boys. As Wing Foot dropped down on his knees before him, Chahi pointed to the glowing diamond in the center, and spoke directly to him:

"This is the Morning Star. No chief may wear it until he outshines his warriors in wisdom, strength, and courage!"

Like live coals among dead ashes, Chahi's deep-set eyes shone from his gaunt high cheek bones. The old priest was studying Wing Foot fixedly, as if by his intent gaze to penetrate into the boy's innermost character.

"Chief's son, the Redman needs leaders today as never before," he said, at length and tapped the star-diamond significantly. "Prove yourself to be a Morning Star among our people!"

Wing Foot drew himself up proudly.

"That's what I want to be—a great chief!" he cried, "I want to fight the white man! Tell me, oh Wise One, what was the magic wagon I saw today flying across Beaver Mesa?"

Annoyed, Chahi grunted that it must have been the "fire-wagon" of the agent at Chaco.

"Why does the white man come here?" asked the boy.

"To see what more he can steal!" interrupted Man Hammar, who sat cross-kneed near the fire. "First it was our horses; now it is our children!" he added, and pounded viciously at the strip of Mexican silver which he was making into a wrist-guard.

Wing Foot looked curiously from one wrinkled face to the other.

"My father's name means 'Man of Constant War'," he remarked, "Why does he not fight the white man?"

Chahi turned his somber eyes on the child.

"Should your father fight," he replied, "what good would it do? The soldiers would only come again and kill. Will you never learn, oh simple heart, that all white men lie and steal—yet stand together against us like brothers?"

"I would fight!" cried the boy, and his eyes flashed.

"And die the sooner, little fool!" snorted the medicine man. "Once you are dead, all the easier to take your flocks!"

With a flat stone, Wing Foot began to draw symbols on the wind-ribbed sand.

"I've never seen a white man," he ventured at last. "Are they so strong and clever?"

The priest's eyes snapped.

"Peace, until you can learn to put sense into your words!" he cried. "The white man's power lies not in his arms, but in the troops the White Chief sends him—the guns, the horses, the 'fire-wagons,' the gold. Not one of them is as crafty as your old ram yonder, nor as strong as Man Hammar here, who is not so strong as the Navajos of my time—the buffalo hunters—"

He broke off, and his wrinkled old face lighted up.

"Hear me, chief's son!" he cried, "lest soon my bones be forever gathered to the *Yebechi* and my wisdom die with me! In the old days, we too were strong as the wind and numerous as the grains of desert sand, and crafty as the rattlesnake coiled to strike. In the old days, our women tended the maize that grew tall by the water's edge at Cheelan and every moon we rode forth to hunt the buffalo on the great plains to the North. In hundreds we rode out from the villages, for then we had no need to live huddled under the cliffs, like badgers."

"In hundreds we rode out," he went on, and his eyes kindled to the vision of his youth. "Singing and laughing, I danced ahead of the warriors and behind me came the masked Buffalo-Dancers, tossing their horns and furry manes and swinging in circles like the buffaloes swing when the hunters close in about them.

Other dancers were the hunters, and they harried the buffalo. Around us ran the maidens, leaping and singing to bring us good hunting, and the comely wives followed with the babies on their hips. Behind hobbled the old men, remembering the days of their youth and living over the joys of the hunt."

"For there is no pleasure like chasing the buffalo herds across the sweet plains-grass!" he cried. "To edge closer and closer to the maddened horns and hooves—to circle and dodge the wise old bulls—to close in at last and feel the spear-head push through matted fur and flesh—aye, but that is good! That is the life!"

The old voice had risen excitedly and now the medicine man with the instinct of the true story-teller, lowered it.

"And the home-coming!" he went on, "that is even better than to kill! To return to the villages heavy laden—to hear the maidens' songs again—to sit in the sunlight by the hogan door and watch the women prepare the rich flesh—to lie down at night and sleep beneath the thick hides! And always the tenderest cut, the thickest fleece, the finest horns for me, the *Yebechi* priest,—who now sits like an old woman and watches a Navajo chief herd sheep!"

The scorn in the old voice jarred on Wing

Foot, and broke the spell of the words. The boy sighed deeply, and asked:

"But why does my father not hunt the buffalo now?"

"Because the buffalo are gone," answered the medicine man, bitterly, "because the white man came into our lands and slaughtered the buffalo in thousands for their hides, and muddied the springs and stole the fertile corn-lands —driving us as boys drive jack-rabbits into the canyons!"

The Chahi stopped speaking, and rose stiffly. With his hand on Wing Foot's shoulders, he walked to his horse.

"Get your pony and ride with me," he commanded.

On his calico pony, Wing Foot followed the old Indian across the ridges of snowy sand. Together they splashed through the arroyo stream, and picked their way up the wall and along the mesa rim to the Singing Rock. There the medicine man pulled in his pony.

"Go back now," he said, as the boy drew up beside him. "It is not safe to ride farther!"

"Why does my father hide me here?" Wing Foot demanded, abruptly. "Why can I never ride to the Monuments with you, nor into Cheelan? I like it not!"

The old priest looked at him with burning eyes.

"Aye, you are made to hide like a coyote," he answered, "but here, at least, you are free. If the white man should find you, he would take you away from these canyons and from your people. He would take you to his great stone hogans at Chaco and for years we would never see your face. And you would learn new ways."

He leaned across, and laid his hand on the boy's arm.

"Think not I scorn the white man," he said, seriously, "for some of his ways are good ways and his guns are like the avalanches that bury the valleys. But his ways are not for you, chief's son, nor his words for your lips. Should you go with him, you will never return to your people. Your body may come home, but your heart, the living spirit that dwells here—" His hand touched his breast and moved outward in the stately Navajo salute— "The Warrior-Spirit that is YOU will never be one with your people again. So it is better for you to stay hidden here, even behind the sheep, for a Redman you were born—and a Redman you will die. And now, get back to your canyon!" he concluded shortly, and swung his horse's head away.

As the calico pony picked his way homeward along the mesa-rim, Wing Foot turned over and over in his mind the old priest's words. So

preoccupied was he with his own thoughts that he did not see a horse and rider come trotting along the trail.

"Hello, buddy!"

Wing Foot jumped and jerked up the calico pony. The voice was well modulated and kindly, but the words were utterly foreign to the young Navajo. Amazed, he looked up.

Before him, Wing Foot saw a man of medium height, smartly dressed in tan, with fine brown boots on his legs and feet. He bestrode the handsomest horse the boy had seen, a shining bay with slender nervous ears, a white blaze down his nose, a barrel-like body, long, smooth, powerful legs. Wing Foot looked from the horse to his rider again and saw a sun-bronzed face, steel-blue eyes that twinkled with merriment, a thin-lipped mouth, a lean jaw. Judging the man as he had the horse, the boy found him as good.

From the handsome face, Wing Foot lifted his gaze and saw that the stranger was bareheaded and that his red-brown hair curled back from his temples in a golden crest such as no Indian had ever had. With a strange tightening at his heart, Wing Foot realized that he was staring at a white man.

"Well, buddy? Like my looks?"

Again the level, slightly amused, but meaningless English words. At the sound, Wing

Foot whirled the calico pony and lashed at him with the end of the chin-strap. The Navajo horse sprang away, and the big bay pounded after. Stride by stride, the thoroughbred overtook the mustang until their riders were galloping knee to knee.

"What's the hurry, young fellow?" asked the stranger.

At the veiled amusement in the man's tones, the boy lashed out again and the pony sped like a frightened rabbit toward the Navajo camp. Behind him thundered the bay.

Wing Foot slipped down and ran, terrified, to his father. Notani Nabahi had taken in the situation at a glance and stood erect to meet it. The man reined in his horse, dismounted and came over to the Indian with outstretched hand. The chief ignored the greeting.

"Your son, Notani?"

The Navajo stared back silently. The stranger laughed.

"That's one way of saying yes," he chuckled. "Well, I'll register him that way, anyhow." He turned to the boy and spoke in Navajo: "What's your name?"

"Wing Foot."

"How old are you?"

"Nine summers."

The stranger laughed again.

"Well, I hand it to you, Notani!" he said,

with good sportsmanship in his voice. "That kid ought to have been in school three years ago. Come on, Wing Foot, we'll start making up for lost time!"

He took a step in the direction of the child, but the chief raised his arm.

"Hear me, John Walton," he said, with dignity, "The boy is my only son. I do not wish him to learn the white man's ways."

For a moment the stranger hesitated, then brought a shining silver object from his pocket, opened it and extended it toward the chief. Notani did not see it. The stranger smiled, took out a round white stick, put it in his mouth and lighted it. To Wing Foot's amazement, it smoked like the pipes of the headmen. Wonderingly the boy came out from behind his father's blanket and edged curiously over to see.

"Notani, you know I'm sorry," began the white man, in Navajo. "Lord knows I hate to do it, but this is the boy I was hunting for at Cheelan three years ago."

His hand shot out, and closed over Wing Foot's shoulder. The child twisted violently, but the grip held.

"Let him go!" cried Notani, his voice thick with anger. "You shall not take him!"

"Who's to stop me?" asked the stranger, and, at the casual tone, Wing Foot looked up.

The boy was badly frightened, but something in the white man's voice fascinated him, as once the soft whir of a snake's rattle had made him pause in his favorite game of killing.

"Who's to stop me?" repeated John Walton. "Not you, Notani, for you're too smart an Indian to do anything to bring out the troops again."

Eye to eye they stood for a long moment. Across the chieftain's mind flashed a tragic memory of his early youth, of hogans burned and the women of his clan wailing in sorrow over the bodies of his father and other Navajo warriors shot down in reprisal for the murder of a Government officer. His defiant gaze wavered before the stern-eyed white man, dropped to his son's bewildered and frightened little face.

"Go with the white man," he said, sadly, "—but come back to me an Indian!"

With his blanket to his eyes, Notani turned away. Terrified, Wing Foot tried to wrench himself free from Walton's grasp.

"No—no!" he cried in Navajo. "He will cut out my heart!"

"Why, sonny, whoever told you such nonsense?" Walton asked.

"—Chahi!" faltered the young Navojo. "I —I am afraid."

"Wing Foot!" Notani spoke from over his

shoulder. At the harsh tone the boy looked obediently toward his father.

"Go with the white man!" repeated the chief, "You behave now like a girl—not like the son of a chief, who is the son of many chiefs!"

Rebuked and humiliated, the boy straightened up. Bravely his hand went to his heart and outward to Notani, in the ancient salute. With the bitter eyes of the Navajo men upon him, he let the stranger lead him over to the bay horse. Walton mounted.

"You better ride double with me, bud," he said. "I don't trust you again on that calico."

"Get up with him!" interpreted Man Hammar.

Wing Foot took the outstretched hand, and clambered up in front of the stranger. From the height of the thoroughbred, he gazed down. His father was standing by the camp-fire, his lips a thin hard line, his eyes flaming, his arms folded tightly across his breast under the proud chief's blanket. From face to face the boy looked at the watching Navajos, but not one man showed pity, nor made even a movement in his direction. Later, he wondered where the other Indian boys had hidden themselves, but now he felt too bewildered even to notice their absence.

At a word from Walton, the thoroughbred sprang forward, and in a long canter went swinging across the sand. As he watched the sand widening between him and the camp, as he saw the figures of his father and the Navajos grow smaller, as he became more and more physically conscious of the man against whose body he was leaning, whose arm encircled his waist, Wing Foot felt arising within him a surging rebellion. The old priest's words: "If you go away with the white man, you will never return to your people," sounded again in his ears. A red mist swam before his eyes, and wildly, with all the strength of his hard young body, he began to fight.

Walton smiled and tightened his arm about the boy's waist until Wing Foot could hardly breathe. The boy bent his head, and sank his teeth into the white wrist before him.

"Damn it, you young devil!" cried Walton and shook his hand free. Tightening his other arm about the child's waist, he raised his injured hand to his mouth so that the forearm caught the boy's head in a vise, and held him powerless and choking.

"Now listen to me, Wing Foot," began the smooth tones above him, "You and I better understand each other right now. Be a good little Indian, and we'll get on fine. Any more of this,

or any attempts to run away, and we'll have serious trouble. Do you understand?"

Gasping for breath, the boy continued to struggle. Gradually the arm tightened until the pain in his neck and jaw made him dizzy and sick.

"—understand?"

His forehead wet, his body limp, Wing Foot surrendered.

"Aye!" he faltered, and the arm relaxed.

"Fine!" said Walton and raised the reins. The thorough-bred flattened down and ran like a streak of yellow sunlight across the lavender sage.

CHAPTER IV

The U. S. Indian Boarding School at Chaco Reservation is an oasis of civilization in a desert of sage-brush and sand. Out of the enormous distances, the red brick school building, the brick dormitories, the brick faculty houses and the Post Office rise, all exactly alike. Around the sun-baked drill ground, a fringe of stripling poplars droop their dust-grey leaves. In the big sun-bleached establishment, the only spots of color are the petunias which border the flag-pole on the drill ground, and the wind-whipped emblem that tosses against the cobalt sky.

It was late afternoon when Walton cantered into the Reservation with Wing Foot, and pulled up before the administration building. Releasing the boy, he let him slide to the ground and dismounted.

"Come inside!" he commanded, and entered the office.

Wing Foot followed. The big room was unlike any hogan he had ever seen. Queer looking objects that resembled the desert but were

covered with glass, hung on the walls. Over what was evidently intended as a camp-fire, hung a fine Navajo blanket, which should have been on some Indian's shoulders. Near the door stood an upright shining yellow thing, on which sat several friendly little Navajos, who grinned at Wing Foot, but did not speak to him.

In one corner at a similar yellow object sat a slender girl dressed in crisp yellow organdy, with an amazing jacket. Wing Foot recognized it immediately as made from a Navajo blanket, zig-zagged with red and black lightning symbols. About her neck she had knotted a violent red and yellow bandanna handkerchief. Short, taffy-colored curls framed a face of piquant charm.

As the screen door slammed behind Wing Foot and Walton, the girl looked up from her work. An expression of eager welcome flashed across her face, her blue eyes twinkled with merriment. Rising quickly, she crossed the room, and her hand went to Walton's shoulders, as if she had been longing all afternoon for this one touch of his hard-muscled body. Walton's hand closed over hers. "Careful, the children are watching!" the girl's eyes telegraphed a long look. The Disciplinar laughed and tossed hat, gloves and riding-quirt onto the file case.

"Well, Big Chief—returning with another scalp?" teased the teacher.

"Yes, it's Notani's boy—the one I've been after since September," answered Walton, and crossed to his desk. "Judy, I sure had a tough hunt for him—found him after a two day ride up Canyon du Chelly!"

As Walton looked through his mail, the teacher knelt before the new pupil to make friends.

"Hello, chief's son!" she remarked cheerfully, in Navajo, "What's your name?"

Wing Foot did not answer. Once before today, he had told his name to a stranger and as a result here he was, miles from home, alone and friendless, in the hands of the enemy. With immediate instinctive sympathy, the keynote of her warm and impulsive character, Judy understood from the trapped look in the child's eyes just how bewildered and frightened he really was.

"My name's Judith Anne Mosely-Williams," volunteered the girl, with a flashing smile, " 'Lady-With-Four-Names' the girls call me."

Wing Foot considered. Instinctively he was attracted to this pleasant person; yet women, and especially white ones, were outlandish creatures to him.

"Don't pay any attention to His Nibs over there," went on the girl, indicating Walton,

"He's the Disciplinar—he's got to go around bossing people, but he's really as harmless as a kitten."

"No wonder you're such a rotten teacher, Judy," observed Walton, from the desk where he was making out Wing Foot's registration card. "You're too free and easy with these hoodlums—they don't understand."

"You're the one who doesn't understand!" flared the girl. "How would you like to be dragged away from your people and be slammed down here in this God-forsaken school with a lot of God-awful rules and regulations? You poor youngster," she added, turning to Wing Foot, "I feel sorry for you—you don't know what you're in for!"

Walton smiled as he blotted the entry-card and slipped it into its proper place in the filing cabinet.

"Somebody must be pretty homesick herself," he observed with a glance at the taffy-colored head, "How about a ride tonight?"

The Lady-With-Four-Names did not look up. Wing Foot had unbent far enough to permit her to look at the turquoise beads which he wore. She took them between her slim white fingers.

"—um, beautiful!" she declared, in Navajo, "Young chief take care of them—give them to pretty Indian girl some day."

The benchful of little Indians had been watching alertly. Among them was a small, brown Indian girl. She could not have been more than six years old, and the ugly gingham dress of the Reservation fitted illy upon her dainty body. Her face was round, her skin golden. From behind the blue-black fringe of her hair, which had been cut straight across her forehead, peeped nut-brown rollicking eyes. At Judy's words, she slid off the bench and approached Wing Foot. Reaching out an inquisitive hand, she fingered the silver-embossed belt of the chief's son. Wing Foot drew back haughtily, and the eyes of the young Navajos on the bench brimmed with merriment. Were it not for Walton, they would certainly make fun of this "greenie" just in from the Reservation.

Judy turned to the little girl.

"Corn Blossom, behave yourself!" she chided gently, "Wing Foot, this is a Pueblo girl from Acoma—"

"I don't like Acoma Indians!" answered Wing Foot immediately.

"I don't like Navajos, either!" retorted Corn Blossom, thrusting out an impudent little red tongue.

A titter ran over the benchful of small Indians. Walton looked sternly in their direction, and they pulled their small faces down into

frightened solemnity again. Evidently the strong white man had at some time given bad little Navajos something which made them regard him with wholesome fear. Seeing their fright, the Disciplinar chose to ignore the breach of discipline. Judy tapped Corn Blossom's hand lightly.

"Why, I'm surprised at you both!" she scolded, gently, "Go back to your seat, Corn Blossom. What are you going to do with this young hope of the Red Race now. Your Honor?" she asked, glancing toward Walton.

Like her youthful charges, the Lady-With-Four-Names was just a bit afraid of this masterful white man. Except for occasions when she could no longer hide her affection, she covered her true feelings with a cloak of bantering lightness which fooled neither him nor herself.

"Put him through the usual routine," answered Walton, from the file cases, and looked at the giggling Indian youngsters on the bench. "Go into the next office, children," he sternly said. "Wait for me there."

One by one the Navajos slid off the bench and marched solemnly in single file into the Disciplinar's private office. Corn Blossom was cock-sure, the boys less confident of what lay in store for them when the powerful white man came in after disposing of the chief's son. In

their erect little bodies was a certain tragic gallantry, in their frightened eyes a sadness to be found at first in the eyes of all children at a Reservation School where hundreds of little Redskins come in from the Reservations, often fighting like wildcats, to be won over by kindness if they will respond to it; and if not, to be brought to heel by a strong-willed white or Indian disciplinar, who must master his difficult job, or have it master him. The last scared child marched out, and Walton turned back to Judy.

"I'll bring the horses around about eight o'clock," he said, taking Wing Foot's hand in his.

During the hours that followed, Wing Foot underwent a complete physical transformation. Walton took him to a strange hogan and left him with a taciturn old man who stripped him of his quaint velveteen tunic and buckskin breeches, and scrubbed him from head to toe with queer smelling soap. To his great annoyance and distress, another white man cut off his long glossy hair and shingled his head with horse-clippers. Walton returned, made an inventory of his necklaces and clothes and locked the bundle away in a shiny black tin thing labeled "Locker 211." By the time the three Whites had finished with him and had dressed him in the regulation blue denim over-alls,

Notani Nabahi would not have recognized his son.

With four hundred other little Navajos, Wing Foot was then driven into a large dining-room, and at a command from Walton was made to sit down at a pine table. Before him lay several shining silver objects, one of which resembled a tiny fishing-spear. After some unintelligible words from an older white man, Indian girls placed on each table steaming platters of mutton bones cooked with potatoes, carrots and onions. Wing Foot watched wide-eyed while the boys scooped large quantities of the stew onto their plates and began to stab at the savoury food with their fishing-forks. Pulling the dish toward him, the young Navajo helped himself generously and began to stab also. If this was the white man's way of teaching him how to fish, it was a very pleasant way.

After dinner, games followed on the drill-ground. Wing Foot stood on the side lines and watched. While he was debating in his mind which boy he would challenge to a wrestling-match, a tall Navajo youth stepped to the flag-pole and blew a haunting melody on a queer looking silver flute. Wing Foot looked at him with interest. So the white man had a flute clan, too, like the Hopi, only they saluted the night instead of the dawn!

At the sound of the bugle, the boys stopped their ball-game and began to stroll severally and in groups toward their dormitories. Wing Foot watched them as they disappeared. Now that he had had his dinner, it was time for him to be starting home to Singing Rock, himself.

"Hey, you Navajo! Come here!"

Wing Foot turned. On the porch of the dormitory stood a tall young Indian, who beckoned imperiously to him. Wing Foot made no movement to obey and so the youth ran down the steps and approached.

"What's the big idea—breaking taps?" the older Indian asked, impatiently, and reached out as if to take Wing Foot by the collar. The Navajo leaped back, and quickly sized up the newcomer. He was a big chap, heavily muscled, but too fat for Navajo standards of strength. His face was broad and flat, without the high cheek-bones and aquiline features of the true Plains Indian.

From the row of Faculty houses came the clatter of horses' hooves. Across the drill ground rode Walton, with the Lady-With-Four-Names on a grey pony beside him. Seeing the two Indians by the flag-pole, the Disciplinar cantered over, followed by the girl. At a glance, Walton took in the situation.

"Wing Foot, this is Earth Tongue Jim, your

monitor," he explained, indicating the youth. "He will show you your dormitory, and you must do everything he tells you."

"He is a Pueblo Indian—Moqui from Acoma!" Wing Foot answered scornfully, "Navajo chief's son will not go."

With an impatient exclamation, Walton swung off the thoroughbred and strode over to the two boys.

"Wing Foot, the first rule here is no fighting!" he began, sternly, "You cannot call Jim a 'dead one' because your tribe used to be enemies of his people, without his fighting you, so apologize at once."

Wing Foot looked from Walton to the sullen face of the Acoma youth. He had no intention of apologizing, and his eyes showed it. Behind them, the Lady-With-Four-Names laughed. Walton turned to the monitor.

"Put him to bed, Jim, and forget it!" he ordered, "It's his first day here. Wing Foot—" He swung toward the Navajo, "Do as Jim tells you—otherwise you and I are in for trouble, understand?"

Realizing that the odds were against him, Wing Foot followed the monitor. Earth Tongue Jim shoved him into the boys' dormitory. Down the length of the big white room extended rows of Army cots. Beside each, an Indian boy stood undressing. Wing Foot

stopped to stare at a shapely bronze back as it wiggled into a long white garment. Jim reached out, caught the Navajo by the collar, and shoved him toward an empty bed.

"Get undressed, Freshie!" he commanded, and tossed a nightshirt onto the folded blanket.

Fascinated, Wing Foot watched the boys around him as they folded up their clothes and laid the neat pile on chairs at the head of each bed. Surely Walton did not expect him to sleep huddled like a sheep in this hot room, while outside the Harvest Moon was rising and the night wind running coolly across the mesa!

Through the open window came again the melody, silversweet from the bugler's lips. Immediately the lights winked out in the dormitory. Bewildered and with a queer pain tugging at his heart, Wing Foot undressed, slipped into the night shirt, crawled on top of his cot, and pulled up the Army blanket.

As they cantered across the moon-drenched sage, Judy turned toward Walton.

"I can't get that little Navajo out of my mind," she remarked, thoughtfully, "You'll be gentle with him, won't you, Dear?"

Walton frowned. This was no new subject between the two, for Judy had often spoken to him before regarding what she considered his over-severity toward his young charges. Judy noticed his silence, and laid her hand on his.

"Excuse me, John, but generations of Navajo warriors behind him make him hate you and Uncle Sam," she continued. "Promise me you'll be patient—for my sake?"

The girl's tender gesture softened Walton's irritation.

"Of course I will, but I can't have him breaking up the discipline of the entire school," he answered, by way of compromise.

CHAPTER V

The following day, Wing Foot had his first serious encounter with Walton. For hours he had been compelled to sit on a hard yellow bench in the school-room, watching the Indians make incomprehensible white marks on a blackboard behind the Lady-With-Four-Names. By mid-afternoon, he was restless and irritable, in no frame of mind for the strange events which followed.

On the drill ground, Walton and the monitors divided the timid little Indians in squads, and taught them a simple manoeuvre ending with Flag-Salute. The Disciplinar gave his orders in English, and if some little Navajo just in from the Backcountry did not understand, he was pushed into proper place by his monitor. After a difficult half-hour for everyone, Walton called "Halt!" The children drew up before him in two lines, and stood still. Everyone stood still except Wing Foot. He understood that "Halt!" must mean "stand still," but he did not wish to do so. He wished, instead, to

walk out to the flag-pole, stand beside Walton and watch the other children march. As a chief's son, it was his privilege.

Walton smiled as the erect little Navajo stepped out of line, walked across the yellow clay, and took his place proudly beside him. Earth-Tongue Jim sprang forward, seized the young Indian, and shoved him back into his squad. Down the line of watching children ran a titter of amusement.

Walton clapped his hands smartly for order, and sung out his next command, "Squads attention! Salute the Flag!"

Hundreds of brown eyes went upward, hundreds of little bronze palms jerked to their foreheads in snappy salute. Only Wing Foot refused. Around and behind him, the faces of the Navajo children grew solemn and fearful. Jim reached in his heavy hand, jerked Wing Foot's palm up to his head. With a quick twist, the chief's son freed himself, and struck the Acoma lad. With a burst of foul-mouthed profanity the monitor caught the little rebel, and shook him violently. Seeing the incident, Walton stepped over and motioned Jim away.

"Wing Foot, salute the Flag!" he said, quietly.

Putting his lips together like an obstinate little mule, the chief's son refused. Walton looked down at the child's flushed face. From

the watching children came a snicker, immediately hushed by the monitors. The Disciplinar took two steps smartly back.

"Wing Foot, go to your dormitory and stay until I come!" Breathless, the children watched. For a long moment Nabahi's son stared defiantly into the cold blue eyes of the white man. Then the Indian child turned, and went trudging across the drill-ground.

The Disciplinar was not long in joining him. An Ex-Army Captain, Jack Walton had come into the Indian Service for another purpose than to herd little Navajos about a drill-ground, but his chief had assigned him to Chaco Reservation to learn his future job from the ground up. Now, as disciplinary officer of the largest school on the Navajo Reservation, he was not relishing his job of bringing game little Redskins to heel. Somehow, it didn't seem entirely sporting.

"I wish I could make you understand, Wing Foot," he began pleasantly, and sat down on the bedside beside the boy, "what this drilling is all about. I don't get out there and make you march just because I like to order you around. It happens that the White Father in Washington has made me his headman here. Can you understand that?"

The child nodded.

"Well, the White Father feels that it is good

for you to march," continued Walton, "and, as his headman, you should obey me, not for my sake, but because he speaks through me."

"Then the White Father is a fool, too!" interrupted Wing Foot, scornfully. "I am no sheep, to be driven around like one!"

Walton looked meditatively at the boy, seeing behind him the generations of high-spirited and freedom-loving Navajos who had produced this small rebel.

"Don't speak to me that way, Wing Foot!" he said, quietly, "It isn't for you to question what the White Father or I decide to do. Right now, I represent the Law to you, do you understand?"

The child was silent.

"Right now you're here to obey the Law, and I'm here to see that you do it!" continued Walton, more sternly.

"What right have you to bring me here?" demanded the child. "You are not my father —to tell me what to do!"

Walton looked down again into the flushed little face. He must try to find words to make the child understand.

"No, I am not your father," he agreed, wearily, "but right now I represent the White Father who owns us all. He has told me that he wished Wing Foot to come to the white man's school and learn the white man's ways,

so that when he grows up, he can protect his flocks—"

"—from the white man?" Wingfoot interrupted, insolently.

Seeing that the boy was employing the arguments of older Navajos, Walton gave up, and slipped off the bed.

"Don't use that tone to me, Wing Foot!" he commanded. "You owe me an apology for insubordination on the drill-ground, but I am not going to force you to make it. But don't disobey me again! Do you understand?"

Wing Foot did not answer. In his breast was rising the tumultous anger which had come over him yesterday when Walton had taken him away from his father.

"Wing Foot, answer me! Do you understand?"

The child's head dropped.

"Yes."

"Yes, who?"

"Yes, sir."

That had been their first encounter. Walton had a sneaking feeling that the young Navajo had gotten rather the better of the argument. Their second meeting came after Earth-Tongue Jim had tried to teach Wing Foot to brush his teeth. Scratching, biting and kicking, the child fought the monitor until Walton heard the commotion and came over to investigate. In the

end, the teeth were brushed. Surreptitiously nursing his bleeding hand and smiling in spite of himself, Walton retired the victor.

That night Wing Foot ran away. Jim, who was sent to trail the child, brought him back when the other children and the teachers were on the drill-ground, waiting for dinner. Walton saw the Pueblo Indian pushing the little Navajo across the yard and his heart sank. Anticipating a scene, the children came running. Judy stepped nearer to listen.

Walton called the culprit out before the solemn-eyed children, and reprimanded him sharply. Erect and defiant, Wing Foot took the stinging words in silence. Inwardly relieved, the Disciplinar demanded the boy's promise never to run away again.

"I won't promise, *ma' ini—tl' ish bizide* [damned coyote—spittle of a snake]!" Wing Foot swore distinctly.

Around the circle of shocked little Indians, ran a gasp of utter astonishment. Walton's soldierly figure jerked up at attention. Judy's face went white. Moving forward, she put her arm around Wing Foot's shoulders.

"John, don't punish him!" she begged, "Remember—you promised!"

"Miss Williams, keep out of this, please," the Disciplinar said, the hot color flooding to his cheeks. "Wing Foot, come here!"

Badly frightened, the chief's son stepped forward.

"Wing Foot, if you ever use those words to me, or run away again," Walton said slowly, "I am going to whip you. Do you understand what I mean?"

"N-no."

Walton knew that Navajo parents never struck their children. He could not afford to have Wing Foot misunderstand him, so he raised the riding-crop which he carried and hit his own boot sharply with it.

"If you run away again—" he threatened, and flicked the boy's leg with the lash. "Now, do you understand, what I mean?"

At the touch the young Indian leaped back outraged.

With her eyes flashing, the Lady-With-Four-Names sprang forward and touched Walton's arm.

"John, you wouldn't—!" she flared at him, "You'll break his spirit!"

Walton looked from the Navajo to the girl, and then to the shocked faces of the teachers behind her. The situation had developed into an embarrassing scene, and he felt strangely unable to cope with it.

"Miss Williams, I asked you once before not to interfere on the drill-ground," he said, levelly.

Cheeks a-flame, Judy stepped back. Walton turned to Wing Foot.

"I mean every word I just said, Wing Foot!" he continued, curtly. "That's all."

Without further words, the Disciplinar turned on his glossy heel, and walked away. Watching him, Judy's eyes filled with tears. Then she became conscious of the curious faces of the other teachers. With her taffy head flung high, she walked carelessly away toward the dining-room.

Wing Foot stood alone on the drill-ground, looking after Walton's retreating back. If he could have thrust one of the long Navajo sheep-skinning knives between those smartly-clad shoulders, he would gladly have done so. Then on his hand, he felt a light touch. He swung about.

Before him stood Corn Blossom. The roguish eyes were round with fright, the golden face solemn.

"No—no!" she said, slowly, "No fight Disciplinar!"

Wing Foot did not want her to see how frightened he was, so he straightened up and threw out his chest.

"Wing Foot's not afraid!" he scoffed, in Navajo.

Uncomprehending, the little girl shook her head and continued:

"Corn Blossom no like to see chief's son fight Disciplinar. Disciplinar mean what him say—him bad man—him hurt little Indians!"

The fawn eyes grew round with fear. Wing Foot stared into their warm, brown depths. For the first time since he had left his grandmother's petticoats, here was some one who cared whether he was hurt or not. He was pleased and so, manlike, he affected indifference.

"Wing Foot is strong warrior!" he boasted, "He fight white man!"

The dining-room door opened, and a fat white woman bustled out on the porch.

"Corn Blossom!" she called impatiently, from the steps, "Come eat your dinner! And you—" she turned angrily on Wing Foot—"You little runaway, don't you know you're not allowed to talk to little girls?"

With a backward glance from the fawn eyes, the Acoma girl ran up the steps and into the dining-room. Wing Foot trudged dinnerless to his dormitory.

The third and last encounter came two days later, during the Saturday afternoon bath-period. This was always an ordeal for the Disciplinar, the monitors and especially the new pupils. Trained in the Indian warrior's tradition of personal modesty, it seemed agony for the little Navajo boys to be stripped and made

to march for the first time in and out of the showers naked before each other. It was as if their chastity had been violated.

Sensing a struggle, Walton had excused Wing Foot from his first shower. After the runaway, the Disciplinar realized that he and the boy might as well have it out sooner as later. In the dressing room he explained quietly why it was necessary that all the boys take their baths together. Wing Foot said nothing, but when Walton pulled off the child's overalls, one look into the shocked brown eyes told the Disciplinar that the little Indian was too ashamed and hurt to struggle. The man had the feeling that he was stripping off the boy's pride with his clothes. The shapely bronze body seemed to lose its proud beauty. The fine little head dropped . . .

That night Wing Foot ran away again. When Walton heard of it the next morning, he ordered the bay horse, took the Acoma monitor and started out to trail the child by his footprints. Several miles away, Walton glimpsed his head bobbing up and down among the level sea of sagebrush. When they drew nearer, Walton saw that Wing Foot was running as if for his life.

The thoroughbred overtook the boy easily and Wing Foot turned—a desperate, small animal at bay.

Walton pulled in, and sat looking down at the child. The dignity of him, standing there panting in the sand, exhausted and terrified, yet every inch a chief's son! Walton felt a tightening of his throat, a queer feeling in his heart. He suddenly wished that he were anywhere else in the world except right here in this painted immensity of space, with this plucky youngster and the unfair struggle ahead.

"Well, Wing Foot, I guess we're in for it," he said in Navajo, and dismounted.

With the look of a trapped wild thing, Wing Foot watched the two. Earth-Tongue Jim dismounted, and stood holding his horse. Walton turned toward his saddle, slipped a raw-hide quirt from the pommel, flung the bridle-rein over the bay's head, and slapped the thoroughbred on the flank.

"Lead them off to graze," he commanded, shortly.

Without looking at the Disciplinar, the Acoma youth obeyed, and Walton turned toward the child.

As he raised the whip, Walton hated himself, the lonely desert, the miserable job he had let himself in for, the hard Army training which told him that now he must carry the ugly business through to its cruel end. With teeth clenched and eyes blazing, hands balled into

fists and body erect at first, Wing Foot took the blows in silence. As the punishment continued, the thoroughbred raised his head, snorting. At his bridle, Earth-Tongue Jim stood watching, his eyes brutal with the Indian's primitive enjoyment of another's suffering.

Walton swore softly to himself as he raised the quirt again. Before the next blow the child flung himself at the white man's feet. Walton hurled the whip to the ground and turned away, but the boy lay face downward on the sand, sobbing as though his heart would break. With a queer ache at his heart, the Disciplinar stooped and picked up the small Navajo, turning with him toward the horses, and the awed face of Earth-Tongue Jim. . . .

Within ten minutes after their return to Chaco, the whisper had run through the dormitories. When Wing Foot appeared on the drill-ground for Flag-Salute, the Navajo boys gathered around him with mocking, scornful eyes.

"Wing Foot, come here!" commanded the Disciplinar, knowing his young charges' methods of baiting newcomers.

The child stepped before the soldierly white man at the flagpole. Eyes brimming, cheeks swollen from tears, the chief's son looked up, and Walton's throat contracted with sudden pity. The boy was afraid.

"Go into my office, please, and get me my—my spurs," he said, without meeting the child's eyes, "Look until you find them."

By the time the errand was done, Flag-Salute was over. Wing Foot turned away toward some pinon scrub on the far side of the playground. Led by Earth-Tongue Jim, a group of Navajo boys with baseball gloves and bats were heading for the ball-ground. Wing Foot paused to let them pass. As Jim saw the chief's son, he leaned close.

"*Yat-tay, Do-Atin!*" he said, contemptuously.

At the shameful phrase, commonly used by Navajos to refer to a broken mustang, Wing Foot started and drew himself up. One by one, the small Indian boys passed, flinging the scornful name at him:

"*Yat-tay, Do-Atin!*"

"Hello, Tamed One!"

Wing Foot listened with an expressionless face. Across the drill-ground, a group of girls stood talking with the Lady-With-Four-Names. Among them was Corn Blossom. When they heard the boys' voices, they strolled over. Too shy to join in the baiting, they stood and giggled, all except Corn Blossom. She and Judy turned accusingly toward Walton, as he strode over to investigate.

When he had heard the jeering phrase, Wal-

ton lost his temper and sent the boys to quarters. Turning back to Wing Foot and the girl, the man saw the child had walked away. Puzzled, the Disciplinar watched the erect little figure disappear behind a clump of pinon.

"John, surely you didn't—?" asked the Lady-With-Four-Names, with an odd timbre in her voice which caused Walton to swing quickly around.

"Yes, Judy, I did," he confessed, "but don't take it too seriously—it'll be forgotten tomorrow."

"It'll never be forgotten!" the girl answered, "You've given him his permanent name. It'll hound him through life, making him hate you and every Indian and every white man who uses it!"

Walton's face grew serious, as he realized the truth of Judy's words. Knowing the old Navajo custom, he appreciated the significance of the shameful name. With face and voice apologetic, he tried to explain.

"But, Judy, dear, you don't understand—"

At the well-meant words, Judy's temper slipped the leash of her will.

"You're the one who doesn't understand!" she blazed at him. "You promised me to be patient—"

"Oh, be reasonable, Judy!" the man interrupted. "The boy's undermined the discipline

of the whole school—I've licked some sense into him!"

"You mean you've licked the pride and the spirit and the sweetness out!" retorted the girl, her head high, her cheeks aflame, "You mean you've taken the one kid here who's worth anything—the one little devil who's got spirit enough to defy you—and you've gone over him like a steam-roller!"

"You don't know what you're talking about —and you don't know Indians!" Walton cried, white with anger. "You'll never amount to anything as a teacher, my dear, until you drop all this mock sentimentality and face facts!"

The Lady-With-Four-Names looked at him strangely for a long moment, then slipped the diamond from the third finger of her left hand and extended it to him.

"Here, John," she said, dully.

The man looked at her, at the ring in her palm, then back at her set white face. Both their nerves were at breaking point, from the disciplinary crisis which they had been through, and from the strain of living in the isolation and monotony of the sun-baked Back-country, with its infinity of colored distances, its terrific wind and sand-storms, blazing noons and frigid nights.

"Why, Judy, you're not breaking our en-

gagement because I've done what I think is my duty, are you?" he asked, tensely.

"No, on account of the different way we think," the girl replied, and dropped the shining circlet into his hand. "If you don't understand, John, I'm afraid I can't explain," she added, and turned away.

Under shelter of the pinon, Wing Foot sat down and stared at its twisted roots. The child was too wretched to cry. He could not face his schoolmates again, yet he dared not run away lest Walton come after him. Sharper than the Disciplinar's quirt, the shameful Navajo name *Do-Atin* seemed to cut through the child's body to his very soul. *Do-Atin,* the Tamed, the Broken One!

Behind him, Wing Foot heard a twig snap. Around the pinon root peeped fawn-like eyes, set in a golden little face. It was Corn Blossom. Sideways she edged closer, as if half-afraid that Wing Foot would throw a rock at her. With a final burst of courage, she sat down in front of him and extended her hand. On the open palm lay two sticks of peppermint candy.

"Take one!" Corn Blossom whispered.

Wing Foot looked from the brown palm to the warm, smiling brown eyes.

"Take it, Wing Foot!"

At the name, the chief's son started. She had not called him *Do-Atin,* she was still his friend! Wing Foot reached for the candy, and together they sat and sucked the bright hued sticks, staring at each other with the solemn wordless friendship of children.

The young Navajo looked up. Against the cobalt, cloud-tumbled sky whipped the American flag. Corn Blossom followed the direction of his eyes, and then looked back at Wing Foot. The face of the chief's son had hardened into hate.

"No—no, you mustn't!" Corn Blossom said, shyly, taking his hand, "You must learn to salute the Flag."

With a startled glance at her, Wing Foot watched as Corn Blossom saluted respectfully. The little Pueblo girl, his one friend, then took his hand and with earnest explanations, guided it awkwardly to his forehead.

"That's it!" she said, nodding toward the flag as it fluttered out on the strong desert wind. "That stands for our Uncle Sam, who loves his Indian children!" she whispered softly.

END OF BOOK I

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

Stripes of bright crimson whipping against a cobalt New Mexico sky, the fleecy clouds behind them sliding by like sky flocks of Navajo sheep or the slow-marching years . . .

The flag-pole at U. S. Albuquerque Indian College rears its vivid emblem among a grove of cool live oaks. In front, Kit Carson's old cannon still turn their rusty black mouths to the now silent Indian Country, where years ago they outroared Apache war whoop and crack of contraband rifle. Behind the flagpole is the bandstand, a favorite meeting place. In its pleasant shadows, young Indians in blue denim overalls and grey-printed gingham dresses can sit and talk almost unseen by passersby on the concrete walks beyond.

Across the green velvet lawn, springy from lavish irrigation after the September rains, strode a youth's erect figure. Powerful and military in bearing, the tall young Navajo swung toward the flagpole, stopped, and

snapped unconsciously into a brisk salute. Bronze palm to forehead, his warm brown eyes went up to the flag and then brightened with pleasure as a shaft of sunlight struck the tumbled clouds behind and turned them to wads of silver wool.

The young Indian was Wing Foot. Whatever the passing years had brought to the Chief's son, had served only to make him hard of eye and muscle, strong, reliant. Already he had the look of the tall, spare Navajos of the Backcountry, the ragged nomads of Canyon du Chelly and Lukuchurch Mountain, though his well-muscled body was dressed in cheap white man's garb and his blue-black hair clipped short to the passionate clean line of his hard-muscled neck and back. His face was broader than that of the true Plains Indian, his jaw square and resolute. Already he had broken his nose in football. From above high cheek-bones, his warm brown eyes flashed with tawny light, challenging the world with a certain hard steadiness. The years of loneliness at Chaco Canyon, or perhaps John Walton's quirt, had long ago taught Wing Foot to look Life squarely in the face.

A sound from across the lawn caused the young Navajo to look quickly away from the cloud-flocks streaming across the sky. Through the sun-checkered lights and shadows, an In-

dian girl was coming toward him. At sight of her, Wing Foot swung up his arm.

"Corn Blossom!" he called, joyously.

With an answering cry, the Acoma girl waved and ran forward. Wing Foot crossed the lawn with the light swiftness of a desert coyote. Seizing both her hands, he was drawing her into his arms when a shout came from the sidewalk beyond.

"*Yat-tay-hay*, Navajo—we're proud of you!" called a young Indian from a group of students passing the bandstand.

With a rueful laugh, Wing Foot dropped Corn Blossom's hand and waved back to the boys.

"Thanks, Old Timer!" he called, "I'll do my best."

As the boys walked on, Wing Foot turned back to Corn Blossom. As with him, the years had been kind to the rollicking-eyed Acoma girl of Chaco School. The round, mischievous little face had lengthened into flower-like beauty, the chubby body into slender grace. Only the eyes remained unchanged—now wistful with longing, now cool and serene with impudent poise, now brimming with roguish merriment. Too alert to miss Wing Foot's disappointment at having to relinquish her right hand to wave to their passing class-mates, Corn Blossom's teasing mood returned. She

withdrew her other hand, but Wing Foot was too happy to notice.

"Corn Blossom, I've got it—my scholarship to Thorpe University!" he began, the eager words almost tumbling from his lips.

Corn Blossom nodded, answeringly serenely. "I knew it two hours ago."

An expression of puzzled wonder and disappointment flashed momentarily across Wing Foot's face. The eager light faded from his warm brown eyes.

"But, dear, I thought you'd be glad for me," he said, hesitantly, "—and maybe a bit sorry to have me go away and leave you?"

At the hopeful note in Wing Foot's words, Corn Blossom threw back her head and laughed. Even more bewildered, the chief's son looked questioningly at her.

"You're not leaving me, Silly!" she announced, complacently, "You can't!"

"Why, Corn Blossom, what do you mean?"

"Let's sit down on the steps, and I'll tell you," answered the girl, serious for the first time.

They stepped around the rusty cannon, and sat down in the cool shadows. Wing Foot immediately possessed himself of her hand. Mischievous eyes brimming with tender pride, Corn Blossom let him keep it. Emboldened, Wing Foot laid his other warm palm over the

slim bronze hand, and looked expectantly at the Acoma girl.

"I couldn't bear to stay here without you," Corn Blossom began, "and the thought of going back to Acoma simply terrifies me—I don't know why. That's an awful way for a girl to feel about her family, isn't it?"

Wing Foot looked thoughtful.

"I've dreaded Cheelan, too," he confessed, "Maybe it's because we've been away so long. I haven't seen my father for nine years—he sends me money occasionally through our trader, Jim Morris."

"Yes, but Notani's rich, while my people haven't any flocks like your Tribe, or any water," Corn Blossom answered, "All I remember of Acoma is a great rock island rising up hundreds and hundreds of feet out of a desert valley, with hot sunlight blazing down on white-hot rocks. The cistern and water-pools were all dried out, and we children were sick with thirst. My puppy went mad. Father didn't bother to shoot it, he just kicked it over the mesa edge, and it went spinning down onto those terrible rocks below. I never would have had the courage to climb down the hand ladder, only I had to see if my puppy was actually dead, and the teacher happened to be driving along."

"Yes, you told me," nodded Wing Foot,

"But go on, what made you say what you did just now?"

"We're not going to be separated," answered Corn Blossom, shyly, "You see, when I heard that Coach Tupper of Thorpe had gotten off *the Chief* especially to see you run, I knew what would happen, and so I went to the Dean, and—" she hesitated, and looked down shyly at her imprisoned hand.

"Yes, go on!" urged Wing Foot, tightening his palm over hers.

"I hope you won't mind," the Acoma girl continued, "I told him what good friends we'd been all these years, and how I was afraid to go home. Mr. Frazer admitted I was a good stenographer, good enough to hold down a job almost anywhere. Just then Coach Tupper came in, and so I had to tell the whole story all over again."

"And then what happened?" asked the chief's son, too deeply in love to show the impatience he felt.

"Well, Coach Tupper said the Athletic Association needed a stenog, and—"

"Atta boy, Navajo!"

The interruption came from around the corner of the bandstand. Two lanky Navajo youths thrust their grinning faces into the gloom, laughed and went on their way chuckling at the lovers.

"—and so you've got the job?" finished the chief's son, gripping Corn Blossom's hands delightedly.

"Yes. I hope you don't mind my tagging you around?" the girl asked demurely, "The one thing Coach Tupper insisted on was that I mustn't bother you, or interfere with your training. I promised I'd do just the opposite—I'd make you work all the harder."

For answer, Wing Foot took Corn Blossom into his arms and gave her an ecstatic bear-hug. A gong sounded across the lawn, the students came swarming out of the red-brick buildings. Leaping up, the chief's son pulled the Acoma girl to her feet, and reached for her book-strap.

"I can hardly believe it's true!" he said, as they started across the green velvet lawn, "It's sure good of Mr. Frazer to take such an interest in us both."

Corn Blossom raised her eyes to the flag. A puff of wind had stretched it straight out for a moment, and the hot red stripes glowed unbroken against the sky.

"It's our Uncle Sam," she said, "He's given us two step-children a good start in life."

"Yes, and I'll pay it back to him by being the best Injun he's got!" answered Wing Foot. "Gosh, but wouldn't I love to go to Congress when I'm through Thorpe!"

"Say, Redman, wait a minute!" teased Corn Blossom, "You'll be in the White House next."

"And why not—I'm an American-born citizen, aren't I?" retorted the chief's son, as hand in hand they went strolling across the sun-streaked campus lawn.

CHAPTER II

Although its football and track teams are known all over the world where sportsmen gather, Thorpe University drowses in a little-visited, sedate village of Eastern Massachusetts.

Its two hundred acres of wooded hill-campus face the Post Road. The stately elms above this historic old highway have seen fifty generations of American college boys tramping joyously to Thorpe Village, which still outlaws motion picture theatres as a corrupting influence on youthful morals entrusted to its care, but provides the best double chocolate fudge sundaes and nut "brownies" that ever melted the mouths and bank-accounts of affluent American youth. For Thorpe students are generally both wealthy and well-bred. The tradition-hung old university has a waiting list as long as its entrance examinations. It has even been whispered that expectant Alumni have gone so far as to register their prospective off-spring before birth, as Lexingtonians enter their future thorough-breds in the Futurity and

Derby classics. Certainly, many a worried Papa has later discovered that it is as expensive to educate Junior there as to train a Man o' War colt at Saratoga.

Wing Foot and Corn Blossom arrived at Thorpe early in October, three weeks after the fall term opened. Coach Tupper found a comfortable boarding house for the excited little Indian flapper in a shady side-street of the Village. With Wing Foot and a California youth whom he had located on his recent trip, they continued on up the hill toward campus. The rickety taxi lumbered through the fine old gates, coasted down a gravel road bordered with blazing sumac and oaks in their autumnal splendor, and chugged up the hill.

"This is Christmas Tree Alley," explained the wiry little man, as they rolled over the crest and started down a winding lane bordered with magnificent firs and cedar trees.

"It's beautiful," Wing Foot commented, "I can't get over all the greens. Those shiny leaves, what are they?"

"Mountain laurel, I guess you mean," answered Coach Tupper. "That's Rhododendron Hollow. It's always like that, even through the snow. You'll both get on fine here, and the boys will like you after you get acquainted."

In silence they drove up to a rambling ivy-covered stone dormitory, Founders Hall. The

coach told Wing Foot to follow him, and entered the building. As he pulled out his wicker suitcase, the chief's son became conscious for the first time that he was entering a rich man's school. Several groups of students lounging by the door stopped talking to stare curiously. Two others coming over the steep hill-path quickened their pace. As Wing Foot swung past them up the steps, he heard a comment:

"Gosh, what a sunburn that baby's got!"

Smiling, the young Navajo followed the coach inside, and to his room. Above the door, a bronze plate was fastened into the woodwork, with brightly engraved words:

In Memoriam
JOHN ROGERS PALMER, JR.
Chateau-Thierry
July 19, 1918.

Wing Foot looked questioningly from the plate to the energetic little man beside him.

"Yep, you're going to school in a dead man's shoes," commented Coach Tupper, "Nice idea —these war scholarships. Young Palmer was a good kid—I trained hell out of him his Freshman year," he added, knocking briskly, "And say, Injun, don't forget to knock when you enter a room—just our way, y'understand."

The chief's son shot a quick glance at the

coach. Before he could reply, however, the door was opened by a tall youth, a good-natured, gangling, over-grown youngster who looked as if he might have jumped directly from his crib into the baggy tweed trousers he wore with apparent pride. At sight of the trainer, the boy's china blue eyes brightened, his pug-nose wrinkled as he grinned boyishly in welcome. Tupper stepped inside.

"Dick, this is your new room-mate," the coach began. "Wing Foot, meet Dick Harris."

"How do you do?" cried Dick, thrusting out a puppyish hand, "I—I didn't quite catch your name."

"You haven't anything on me!" joked Tupper, "When I first heard it in Albuquerque, I thought somebody had sneezed twice."

The chief's son looked puzzled for a moment and then laughed.

"What's so hard about Wing Foot?" he answered lightly, "That's what my real name means in Navajo."

Dick relinquished the Indian's calloused palm and stared.

"Oh, so that's why you're such a funny color!" he burst out, and caught himself clumsily, "It's—it's the swellest tan I've seen this year. You sure look fit as silk!"

"He's going to look fitter," answered Coach

Tupper, from the door, "Bring him along with you to the field this afternoon, Harris."

"Yes, sir!"

That had been Wing Foot's introduction to college life. After the first few days when the students stared curiously every time he appeared at the Athletic Field or on Campus, he ceased to be of general interest. Once Tom Farrell, a bullying youth bent on wise-cracking any one who looked as if he'd take it, singled the chief's son out for public humiliation as he was passing the sections allotted to each class on the steps.

"Say, Injun, why didn't Sitting Bull get a chair?" he called out, insolently.

Wing Foot turned his head away from the laughing faces of his class-mates, and was passing on in silence.

"Look here, Freshie, you're being spoken to!" a Sophomore called from his section, "Why didn't Sitting Bull get a chair?"

"For the same reason Rain-in-the-Face had no umbrella!" retorted Wing Foot, and went on into Chapel without acknowledging the shouts of friendly approval from the Freshmen and their allies the Juniors, who were collecting in groups across the walk.

As the weeks slipped by, consisting for Wing Foot in days of lecture periods, gruelling work-

outs and tedious chores to reduce tuition and in evenings all too briefly spent on Corn Blossom's vine-hung porch in the Village, the student body let the young Indian severely alone. Rush week for the national fraternities came and went. Although Corn Blossom's practical common sense and tender tact had prepared him, Wing Foot waited all night for upperclass footsteps to pause at his door and for a stern voice to bid him come out. Dick Harris, his room-mate, was "bid in" early during the evening, but the chief's son continued to wait hopefully in his chair. Dawn found him asleep there, with his cheap nickel watch lying on the floor where it had slipped through his relaxed fingers.

Field Day at Thorpe occurs on the first Friday in November, the day before the Thorpe-Stoddard Game. The three-mile Marathon is one of the main events, for a Thorpe student once established the world's record on this occasion, and proud Alumni turn out enthusiastically every year in the hope that history may repeat herself. For weeks before the big day, Coach Tupper had been grooming his Navajo entry. The young Indian's magnificent physique and winged feet soon began to win him public notice again. Supercilious upperclass men stood at the fence with stop-watches as he spurted during the crisp October afternoons.

While waiting on table in Commons, he often heard his name mentioned: "That Navajo can sure run!" Once or twice a member of the Faculty stopped to congratulate him, but for the most part he went his way quietly, longing inwardly for the vivid Indian Country and the open friendliness of the West. Had it not been for Corn Blossom's enthusiasm and encouragement, he would have suffered acutely from homesickness, though he often wondered ironically which was home to him, the sun-baked drill-ground of Chaco Reservation School or the shady band-stand at Albuquerque Indian School. What he did not realize was that New Mexico is home to the Redman, while in Massachusetts he is an alien.

At twilight of the evening before Field Day, Wing Foot was studying in his room when a knock came on the door. In response to his call, Tom Farrell entered, and came breezily over to the desk.

"Say, you, where were you this afternoon?" asked the big youth, anxiously. "Tomorrow's the Big Day—why weren't you out on the track?"

Wing Foot looked up swiftly. A wave of antagonism swept over him, and then he shrugged his shoulders. What was the sense in resenting this white boy's words, he argued to himself, with Indian stoicism.

"I did my five miles this morning—while you were still asleep," he answered, calmly.

"Zat so?"

Coming closer, Tom thrust his right hand into his trousers pocket, and withdrew it with a significant gesture.

"Say, if you win tomorrow," he whispered, confidentially, "I'll slip you a hundred bucks after the race!"

In spite of his common sense, the chief's son rose quickly to his feet. Why, this white fool was actually trying to buy him! With a nod of his handsome head toward the door, Wing Foot answered levelly:

"Thanks, no. I'll do my running for Thorpe —not your bankroll."

Tom slid off the desk.

"All right—all right!" he replied easily, moving toward the door, "Maybe you don't need it!" He could not resist calling back as he went out and left the Navajo standing by the desk, his balled fist gently striking the polished wood.

CHAPTER III

Field Day at Thorpe University! Pretty girls in rich fur coats and crisp chrysanthemums, collegiate young chaps shaggy with racoon skins, proud fathers and mothers, habitually dignified Alumni seemingly gone mad for this one riotous week-end, and sedate Faculty turned out in an exuberant mob which overflowed the new concrete Stadium even to the bleachers and the training-benches. As one man, they joked, stamped to keep their feet warm, sang and whacked each other jovially on fraternal shoulders. In the field before the Trustees' boxes, a nimble youth tied himself into bow-knots leading a rousing cheer.

Wing Foot had secured Corn Blossom a seat behind President Williams' box. Coach Tupper had been loathe to part with one of his choice tickets, but the Navajo's warm, pleading eyes had at last shamed the white man into generosity. In her cheap blue suit and uninteresting hat, the little Indian flapper felt distinctly ill-at-ease among the summer ermine coats and chic felt helmets of her neighbors.

During the opening events, she sat mouse-like and longed to be anywhere else except among this expensively-perfumed and happy-go-lucky crowd. When the three-mile Marathon came up on the score-board and twenty or more contestants trouped to the line, however, she was all attention.

A revolver cracked, the massed group sprang forward. One by one the runners separated and spread out over the gleaming track. Corn Blossom leaned forward eagerly with little regard for the ears in front of her.

"Come on, you Navajo!" she shouted.

Among the runners, a bronze body shot forward as if in response to her shout. Forging easily ahead with the tireless pace of the Navajo-Apache runner, Wing Foot turned his head toward the grandstand and scanned the rows of excited faces. From behind, a youth wearing a great crimson R on his track-suit, challenged the Indian's lead. The chief's son spurted and held his own through the first gruelling mile.

As the runners flashed past Prexie's box on the second lap of the classic, Corn Blossom leaned forward again.

"Come on, you Arizona jack-rabbit!" she shrieked, "Show us your speed!"

With an amused smile lighting up his distinguished face, President Williams looked

around. The pretty Indian flapper was standing up, all her timidity forgotten, dancing from one foot to the other in a state of intense excitement.

"Come on, you Navajo!" she shouted again, and the entire section took up the ringing cry.

"Come on, you Navajo—Navajo!" they yelled, delightedly.

The second mile saw Wing Foot still in the lead. He ran without effort, as if the thousands of Indian runners behind him who had sped for days at a stretch across the painted Navajo Country without food or water, had poured their iron endurance into his hard, silken muscles. He ran as easily as he breathed, seemingly as tirelessly, effortless, without outward manifestation of emotion of any kind.

The grandstand and bleachers had caught up Corn Blossom's cry, and went mad with excitement. As Wing Foot swept around the curve of the last lap and came speeding down the home-stretch, they rose and watched. Faces grew tense. Hands clutched shoulders in front of them, which remained unconscious of their grip. In the silence of ten thousand spectators, a girl's voice rang out shrilly:

"Come on, you Navajo!"

Calling on all his reserve strength at the sound of the beloved voice, Wing Foot shot

forward—flashed across the line! Twenty thousand eyes turned unconsciously toward the score board to see the time come up. As the record-breaking figures flashed into view, a roar rose from the packed Stadium to the sunset sky. By God, the Navajo had hung up a new record!

Thousands of sport-mad spectators immediately went wild with joy. Beside herself, Corn Blossom cracked her scarf above her head and started an Apache war dance. Students and Faculty about her were shouting themselves hoarse. The Indian flapper suddenly remembered someone, leaped over the seats in front of her, vaulted the rail of Prexie's box and went racing across the field to the trainer's bench. Unable to control its enthusiasm any longer, the crowd followed her. Stampeding out of the grandstands, they overflowed in an exuberant yelling mass onto the track in search of the victorious Navajo.

Wing Foot stood beside Coach Tupper. The wiry little man was swearing lovingly and slapping the Indian on the shoulder without knowing what he did. The chief's son was breathing rapidly, his anxious eyes scanning the emptying sections of the grandstand. Like a little whirlwind, Corn Blossom came tearing across the field to him and flung herself into his arms. From all directions underclassmen

rushed in, surrounded Wing Foot, lifted him to their shoulders. A vast stream of excited humanity, they swept him toward the Judge's stand, with Corn Blossom clawing her way along beside them.

As the hilarious mob charged in and lowered their new hero to the first step, President Williams came from the platform above. In his hand he held the three-mile trophy, a great silver cup which bore the names of every winner of the Marathon since 1843, and was to become the permanent property of whosoever could establish a new record. Wing Foot could hardly hear the gracious words the President spoke, so overcome was he with pride and a sudden strange nostalgia for his own kind.

". . . an added pleasure to me to present this signal honor to a Redman, who so nobly carries out the traditions of his mighty Race," the well-modulated voice flowed on, ". . . to one of the First Americans, whose forefathers outstripped the desert coyote and later the swift horses of Coronado centuries before our fathers came to these shores . . ."

Wing Foot looked across the crowd toward Corn Blossom. The Acoma girl stood with her flower-like face upturned, her lips quivering, her eyes brimming with tender pride.

"I am reminded, when I look at this bronze young man who has brought undying glory to

us as well as to his own People," the gracious old voice was continuing, "—of another runner of long ago, David, who dared face gigantic odds as this young man is facing them today, one who sang as sweetly as he fought with valor. Do you remember his words: 'For the young men running ahead shall lead the armies to battle!' "

In complete silence, President Williams stepped down and laid his left hand on Wing Foot's shoulder. In his right, he extended the trophy.

" ' . . . To the Swift!' " he said, simply.

As Wing Foot's hand touched the silver handle, a shout broke from students, Alumni and spectators.

"Yea, Navajo!" they shouted, and "Navajo!" echoed the harsh concrete walls, and "Navajo!" came the shrill voices bounding softer and softer back to him. The chief's son dropped down into the crowd, to hide the tears that suddenly misted his eyes.

CHAPTER IV

THORPE COLLEGE celebrates its Field Day victories with a dance which is the social event of the first semester. It is held in the Theatre of the Alumni Building, and girls consider themselves lucky to be invited to come from all parts of the United States to attend it. For the one time except Commencement week, the lid is off.

Wing Foot had rented a dinner coat, and prevailed upon the reluctant Corn Blossom to make herself an evening dress. During their brief hours together before the big event, they had been rehearsing the Collegiate Drag. Nine o'clock that night found the chief's son striding down the elm-bordered street, carrying a single orchid wrapped in green glazed paper, and whistling debonairly. His mirror and Dick's words had convinced him at last that he was "not a total wash-out when it came to looks."

As he walked along in his shining new patent-leather pumps, taxi cabs purred luxuriously past him up the hill. Girls' laughter and the

fragrance of exotic perfume drifted back to him. The twilight was soft and blue warm, with the mellow haze of a New England Indian summer. Pungent odors of burning leaves came sharply to his nostrils. With a tightening of his heart, he thought of ponon smoke rising from Navajo camp-fires, of the smoky hogan of his childhood, of old Yina, unvisited but remembered through the bitter years. Was it his victory over the white man this afternoon, marking the consummation of years of intense struggle, that had made him yearn now for his own? An ambition achieved, makes room in the heart for new goals and for old sentiments long forgotten.

The chief's son swung open the modest white gate of Corn Blossom's boarding house, and strode up the path. Before he stepped onto the porch, however, the front door opened. Corn Blossom ran out. She wore her blue travelling suit and hat, and carried her suitcase.

"Why, you're not dressed for the dance—what's the matter, Dear?" asked Wing Foot.

The arc-light from the street fell across the girl's face, revealing it tear-stained and swollen.

"I've had bad news," she cried, automatically surrendering her bag to him, "Come, I'll tell you on the way to the station."

Hurrying out of the gate, the young Indians walked rapidly down the Post Road to Thorpe station, regardless of the limousines that whirled past them. After her ticket had been purchased, Wing Foot piloted the overwrought girl to the lower end of the platform and put down the suitcase.

"Now tell me what's happened!" he said, firmly.

"I don't really know yet!" evaded Corn Blossom, "Please, Wing Foot, don't you worry about me—everything will come out all right."

"Who wired you?"

"—Jim," confessed the Acoma girl.

"Your brother?"

"Heavens, no! Don't you remember Earth-Tongue Jim at Chaco—the boy who gave you your name?" answered Corn Blossom, impetuously, and then added, "Oh, I didn't mean that! Honestly, Dear, I'm so upset I don't know what I'm saying—"

"I remember now," replied Wing Foot, slowly, "He did give me my name—*Do-Atin,* the Whipped One. Why is he wiring you?"

"That's what I don't understand," answered Corn Blossom, twisting the finger of her glove nervously, "He's the Snake Priest's son, and awfully powerful in the Pueblo Council. It's nothing, though, everything will be all right, I'm sure. I'll be back before snowfall. Prom-

ise me you won't worry—you'll go to the dance tonight?"

"No, I won't!" Wing Foot heard himself saying vehemently, "I've got a good notion to get on this train and go home with you."

"Wing Foot, you can't do that!" cried Corn Blossom, aghast, "Your degree—your future depends on your staying here and making good!"

"I made good this afternoon. They're repaid now for their scholarship."

"But you've only just started!" the Acoma girl almost wailed, putting her hands imploringly on his shoulders, "Promise me, Wing Foot, you won't do anything rash—you'll go to the dance tonight? Why, you've got to go—they're having it for you!"

Around the curving, light-streaked tracks, a headlight flashed. The rails began to sing. Corn Blossom pressed her slim young body closer to Wing Foot's and strained her arms up around his neck.

"—Promise? Oh, darling, I love you so!" she was whispering, as the *Wolverine* came whooping down the steel, and drowned out her tender words. A long kiss, the shout of porter and brakeman, and the grinding of wheels warned Wing Foot that he must release the girl he loved. Swinging Corn Blossom onto

the already moving steps of the vestibule, he ran lightly along the platform.

"Write me every day, won't you?" he begged, tossing the crushed orchid to her. "If you need me, wire and I'll come to Acoma if I have to pull down every stone!"

"Good-bye, Wing Foot—good-bye!"

The train gained momentum, sped on. Coming to the edge of the platform, Wing Foot was forced to stop. He stood watching, as the green and red lights of the observation car pulled farther and farther away, and finally winked into the opaque gloom of the soft November night.

CHAPTER V

A GREAT revolving prism, hung above the tables on the newly laid oaken floor, turned the Theatre into a blur of shimmering radiance. Around and around spun the huge ball of mirrors, and from it rays of colored light swung like beams from a light-house, giving a dizzy and reeling effect to the crowded room. As the dancing couples whirled by, the mellow fingers of light seemed to pick them out and spray them with rainbow lines. Thinly clad girls swayed like modern Bacchantes, their lithe silken bodies close-pressed to sleek-haired young men solemn in first dinner-coats and patent-leather hair. On a raised platform behind a cascade of tinsel streamers, a negro orchestra played frenziedly, the leader rolling his white eye-balls in maudlin abandon as he tooted a saxaphone. As if rooted to the floor before the big horn, Tom Farrell danced with a blonde girl, a chic baby-faced, pouty-mouthed child of verve and style, her rounded young body so scantily clad in nude-colored satin that it was

difficult to tell where the flimsy frock left off and her tanned bare limbs began.

The music throbbed to an end. Like mechanical dolls, the dancing couples ran down and stopped. The blonde flapper wiggled out of Tom's arms and back-kicked her brief skirt, revealing a vanity case and flask fastened on her garter. Choosing the vanity, she powdered her nose daintily, restored the case with another back-kick, and looked curiously around the floor.

"Where's the Redskin?" she demanded at length, "Here we're giving this bust for him—and he hasn't shown up yet!"

Tom wiped his lips on the back of his hand, and restored his flask to his hip pocket.

"Aw, forget him!" he urged boisterously, "You're dancin' straight wi' me tonight, Baby!"

Babe had not heard him, however. With several other couples she was swinging excitedly toward the door. Wing Foot stood in the entrance of the Theatre, smiling shyly. The Navajo was a little embarrassed. At sight of him, boys and girls ran forward from every direction of the floor and surrounded him. Her escort forgotten, Baby ploughed her way determinedly through the crowd. Shouts of welcome rang out.

"Atta boy, Navajo—glad to see you!"

"You sure ran a swell race this afternoon—Thorpe's proud of you!"

"Make yourself at home, where's you girl?"

When the music struck up again and the happy crowd started dancing, Wing Foot found himself alone with Babe. Fresh from leaving Corn Blossom, the chief's son was in no mood to return her inviting smile. Unconsciously and yet with all the cold chastity of the purebred Navajo, he was startled and somewhat repelled by the sight before him, by what seemed to him to be utter abandonment and cheap promiscuity in these semi-intoxicated, half-dressed white girls and silly, ineffectual-looking youths. Like a stranger at the feast, he stood staring at the alluring little creature before him.

"Don't you dance?" Babe began, demurely.

Welcoming friendliness of any kind in his present forlorn mood, Wing Foot smiled his charming boyish smile, and replied:

"Yes, but not this kind, exactly. Our dances are religious ceremonies—sacred."

"Oh, I understand," nodded Babe, gazing wide-eyed at the chief's son. "Let me show you ours?"

Before he could answer, the fragrant little body was pressed close to his, the round young arms went up about his neck. There was nothing left for Wing Foot to do but to put his

arm about her and dance. He did so, growing momentarily more ill at ease. The incongruous couple moved awkwardly out onto the floor.

"Dance—do as I do!" whispered Babe's lips as she gazed up at him, "Move your legs, Wing Foot, like you did this afternoon. You were wonderful!"

Grinning to conceal his growing embarrassment, the chief's son manoeuvred several couples successfully and found himself out in the middle of the floor. A clumsy misstep on his part caused Babe to stop dancing, with a rueful little hop.

"Here, I know the kind of dancing you do!" she cried, and bent her slim body double in an Apache war dance. Knees flung high and palms fluttering at her hips, she circled around the Navajo.

"Yay-yi-yi! Yay-yi-yi!" she yipped, like a little desert coyote.

Babe's ridiculous solo caused the neighboring couples to stop dancing. With a grin, the orchestra leader caught the girl's tempo and struck up *Red Wing* in jazz tempo. The contagious rhythm and shrill Apache yodel spread like wild-fire through the maudlin, intoxicated crowd. In a moment, the whole roomful was yipping and dancing.

From where he still lounged by the orchestra, Tom looked across the floor, and saw Babe and

Wing Foot the center of attraction. Lurching across drunkenly, he confronted the chief's son. Wing Foot stood transfixed, staring at the dancers. Tom shouldered his way forward, seized Babe and spun her roughly away from the Indian. The girl slipped and sat down suddenly on the polished floor.

"Hey, you Navajo, that's my girl!" Tom cried, belligerently, "Wotd' you mean dancin' wi' a white girl, anyway?"

"Be still!"

Wing Foot hardly recognized the imperious words as his own. They had an immediate effect, however, on Babe and the other dancers. She sat where she had fallen, they stood as if frozen in their tracks.

"An' wot's more—" hic-coughed Tom, reaching into his trousers' pocket, and bringing out a fat roll of bills, "Here's your pay for winnin' that race this afternoon. Now get out of here, you dam' Redskin!"

Without replying, Wing Foot swung at the heavy-set youth. Already unsteady from drinking, Tom crumbled down onto the floor. From among the startled dancers, a boy's voice rang out shrilling:

"Hey, cut that out, you wild Indian—you're in the presence of ladies!"

The chief's son swallowed, squared back his shoulders, unclenched his hands. Struggling

to put down his anger, he turned toward the frightened girls huddled together, and bowed.

"I'm sorry," he said, simply, and walked out of the Theatre.

Dick Harris, his childish face puckered with genuine concern, followed Wing Foot to the dormitory, and to their room. He found the chief's son standing by the study table, looking at Corn Blossom's photograph. Approaching the Navajo, Dick put his arm around the Indian's shoulders.

"Gee, I'm sorry for what happened just now!" he said, "You sure ran a great race this afternoon!"

Without giving Wing Foot a chance to reply, Dick leaned closer. Pug-nose wrinkled and pale eyes squinting with well-intentioned but puzzled stupidity, he continued:

"Say, what did you ever tell 'em you were a Redskin for? That's where you made your first mistake!"

Dropping the photograph of Corn Blossom, Wing Foot whirled on his room-mate.

"I'm one Indian who's proud to be a Redskin!" he blazed, "Where I made my first mistake was to think I ever belonged here among you whites!"

Head tilted to one side, jaw lowered, eyes flashing dangerously, the Navajo advanced on the terrified Freshman. All his heartache over

Corn Blossom's departure, and his white-hot rage at the recent caricature of his sacred tribal dances surged up in one great wave of revolt.

"And what's more—" he concluded, passionately, "I'm going back to my own people just as fast as I can get there!"

Raising his hands as if to ward off the Navajo's attack, Dick retreated in terror toward the door.

"Gee, I didn't mean anything!" he stammered, "Say, I'm awfully sorry—"

Turning, he bolted out of the door, leaving the chief's son standing in the center of the lighted room.

END OF BOOK II

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

Corn Blossom, bumping along in the front seat of a Government truck, looked about Acoma Valley with frightened yet dimly reminiscent eyes. Mr. Blake, the Indian Service farmer for the Southern Pueblos Agency, had seen her shivering on the Laguna Station platform, and had offered her a ride as far as the Day School at the mesa foot. Try as hard as she could to be appreciative, it was all that the anxious little Indian girl could do to answer Mr. Blake's questions courteously. Corn Blossom's heart was numb with foreboding.

They were driving up a long and narrow valley shouldered in on either side by red-brown mesas, and carpeted gold and green with heather and pinon scrub. Fantastic rock formations stood here and there over the valley floor, as if twisting away from the high winds and terrific lightning bolts which play about this region, wearing down the soft sandstone abutments of the mesas and blasting anew the

scarred yellow pines which have survived the electrical fury of centuries. In the distance arose the pale line of Pueblo of Acoma, clinging like a huge, weather-beaten old grey eagle's nest to the top of a vast island of rock at the head of the valley. The picturesque fortress town on the Rock crowns the skyrie heights of a crumbling mesa which rises a thousand feet out of the flat and vividly colored plain. Contorted rock formations stand on either side of the sky-city, and seem, as it does, to melt into the sun-baked mesa walls behind them like heat mirages or the fabulous Seven Cities of Cibola, which led the first Spaniards north into the Indian Country. These flanking mesas and volcanic spurs are more ancient than Acoma and seem to have given up centuries ago the never-ending struggle with the elements. Only jagged spurs and pilasters now remain like worn tombstones to bear witness to Nature's eternal conquest of herself.

As Mr. Blake swung the truck around Locomotive Rock, the Enchanted Mesa burst onto Corn Blossom's eyes in ever-fresh and startling beauty. Already the morning sun was turning its granite shoulders into ruddy gold. This incredible table-land is only thirty acres on the top, with walls rising a thousand feet so sheer that few white men and probably no modern Indian has succeeded in scaling them.

Gazing at the saffron and red colossus, Corn Blossom remembered stories of her early childhood as if told her yesterday instead of fifteen years ago. The ancestors of the Acoma and Laguna Indian Pueblos, who today own this valley, once lived in laborious security on the mighty table-top. One day, while the men and women were tilling the fields below, an earth tremor closed the secret trail to the top and left the old women and children to starve on the heights above, within sight of their frantic kinsmen trying to find a way up over the slipping shale and hundred ton boulders which now barred their accustomed path. After prayers and sacrifices offered in vain to the angry gods, the entire tribe moved sadly over to Acoma Mesa and built their sky-town there, on rocks almost as impregnable. Here Coronado's men found them in 1540, in a city then as old as man's memory.

Mr. Blake manoeuvred the truck through the two gigantic columns which guard the rear approach of Acoma, and drew up at the sand-dune at the foot of the Horse Trail.

"Far as we go this time," he said, with a kindly look at the Indian girl beside him. "What're you going to do with your bag?"

"Carry it up!" answered Corn Blossom, gamely, as she reached for it in the back of the truck.

"Better leave it for that good-for-nothing beau of yours," suggested Mr. Blake, "Jim's been boasting considerable about your coming home."

Corn Blossom came around to the front and looked squarely at the Government official.

"My beau? Who do you mean?"

"Why, Jim, the *Cacique's* boy," replied Blake, "He's counting on marrying you, my wife tells me. Our nurse-girl brings her all the gossip from upstairs—that's our name for the Pueblo, y'understand," he added, with a chuckle, "And say, Corn Blossom, she'd be mighty glad to have you come over and see us, I know, any time you get lonesome up there for white folks."

Corn Blossom looked with hardening eyes at the tremendous rock-heights above the sand-dune.

"Thank you, that's awfully kind," she said, and picked up her suit-case, "I'd love to come, if I'm here long enough. They won't hold my job back East forever, though!" she added, feeling the need for a gracious remark.

"Well, here's luck, anyhow!" called Blake, starting the motor.

As Corn Blossom dragged her feet through the snowy sand, her mind was in a turmoil. Mr. Blake's words sounded like a kindly but

intentional warning, but there was no turning back now.

Above her stretched the Horse Trail, sunny and deserted except for a ten-year-old urchin whipping a burro up the worn steps. Reaching the top of the sand-dune, she paused for breath, put down her suit-case, and leaned exhausted against the nearest boulder. Opening her pocketbook, the Indian girl drew out the telegram which she had already worn soft with handling since leaving Thorpe Village four days ago. She knew the words by heart, yet she read them again: "Your mother dying, come soon. I wire for your father." The signature "Jim" had puzzled her for hours, until the thought flashed across her mind that Jim must be the *Cacique's* son, probably one of the few youths still at the Pueblo who could read or write enough to send a telegram.

Heavy-hearted, she picked up the suit-case and staggered with it up the age-old rocks. The boy and burro scrambled on ahead. Twice she paused for breath, her hand at her pounding heart. Near the top, the altitude compelled her to sit down and rest. With a rueful glance at the heel of her new patent leather pump, which she had snapped off in a crevice of rock, she pocketed it, took up the suit-case and struggled on up the trail to the mesa top.

Ahead of her lay the sky-city, sprawled in picturesque and primitive beauty over the seventy-acre rock table-top. On the right rose the bell-tower of the old church, built three centuries ago by Acoma's first Padre. In the morning sunlight, the towering windowless walls gleamed white and clean, though at the rear in what had once been the Priest's garden, a corral full of burros thrust out their grey muzzles curiously at her. To the left, extended the main thoroughfare of the town. Three and four-story houses, made of 'dobi with cosy round windows still paned with the original mica, rose in receding tiers on either side. Long ladders of whitened pinon poles stood against their facades. Round bake ovens humped their white backs on the roofs of the first tier. Above were more ladders, more ovens, more rows of neat windows, more 'dobi roofs shining snowy white against the cobalt sky and the tumbled white clouds which came sailing over the Pueblo like heavenly galleons into the harbor of a city of the sky.

As she hopped up the street on her broken heel, Corn Blossom looked curiously about her. On the nearest roof-top, an old man sat at a loom. Another wizened patriarch, naked to the waist, sunned himself and spun a long grey thread between claw-like thumb and forefinger. Corn Blossom smiled, for she remembered how

the Pueblo people regard cloth-making as solely a masculine art.

On the roof opposite, three children were eating a watermelon. It had been split open, not cut, and they thrust grimy hands into its jagged heart and brought away chunks of the dripping red flesh. Beside them a fat woman was raking the whitened ashes of sheep dung from a mound of fired pottery. Feeling Corn Blossom's eyes, the woman looked down, stared curiously at the little Indian girl, and went stoically back to her task.

"I beg your pardon," called Corn Blossom, pausing at the ladder pole and looking up, "but could you tell me which is the Governor's house?"

The fat matron laid down her charred stick and came over the edge of the roof-top. For a long moment, she looked into the girl's upturned eyes without a change of expression on her own placid face.

"—over there," she pointed at last, and did not acknowledge Corn Blossom's thanks.

At the saffron-tinted door of her father's house, the Indian girl paused again, put down her suit-case and wiped the perspiration from her forehead. Powdering her nose daintily, she knocked.

"Come in!" sounded a man's voice, in the Acoma dialect.

Corn Blossom pushed open the door and stepped into a long narrow room. The ceiling was of low log rafters, the walls of 'dobi, whitewashed a mellow ivory hue. In a corner a fire made of several small fagots of pinon burned thriftily. There were no chairs, no tables. A neat stack of blankets constituted the beds, now made up for the day. Several red and black water-jars and baskets of yucca fiber gave spots of vivid color to the room, as did also the festoons of peppers and gourds drying on the walls and a pile of bright-hued red and blue Pueblo corn heaped in one corner. In the opposite corner glowed a great mound of watermelons and pumpkins. The 'dobi floor was clean swept, however, the whole atmosphere one of immaculate bareness.

In one swift glance, Corn Blossom's eye took in the few details in the long narrow room. Now she noticed its occupants. Facing her, but separated from each other, two groups of Acoma Indians sat on the floor and stared at her as curiously as she was regarding them. On the left, she recognized her father, Juan Ako the Governor, tall for a Pueblo Indian, with the majestic bearing which had always terrified her as a child. At his right sat her mother, Hano, now fat and shapeless, in bright Mexican head-shawl, black body-cloth and full calico skirt. From under her glossy black hair

shingled across her forehead and hanging in braids over her breast, Hano's eyes burned intently into her daughter's. Embarrassed, Corn Blossom looked away to the rest of the family, Doe-eyes, a beautiful younger sister and Kito, the impish small brother of five, whom she had never seen.

On the right side of the room sat an old man, the *Cacique,* Chief Priest of Acoma and the most powerful man in the Pueblo community. Like the Governor, he was dressed in a white cotton shirt, belted and worn over his trousers to the hips. A fine old Bayetta red blanket hung about his thin shoulders. At his right hand sat a big buck Indian, unkempt and careless, with long hair framing his face in untidy wisps. His powerful bronze body was visible here and there under torn and muddy clothes. Corn Blossom found herself staring into hard brown eyes, which returned her gaze with mocking serenity.

"Have you no greeting for your parents, oh Rude One?" the Governor said, breaking the silence.

"Why, Father—" began Corn Blossom in English, surprised that she was able after these years to understand the ancient Acoma dialect, "And Mother, too, I—I—they wired me you were sick—I'm awfully glad to see you are well again!" she finished, lamely.

The Governor looked questioningly at Hano. "Sick?"

"Yes, Father," answered the girl, "I've been terribly worried. I got a telegram from Jim, I guess it was, saying that Mother was dying and to come at once."

"I have not been sick a day," answered Hano, speaking like a great bronze Buddha and then continuing her cold-eyed scrutiny of her daughter.

The Governor turned his calm eyes toward the buck Indian on the right.

"Is this true, Jim?" he asked.

The young Acoma laughed easily, rose and lurched over to Corn Blossom.

"Hello, baby!" he said in English, "Sure I wired you."

"You mean you lied!" blazed out Corn Blossom, ignoring his outstretched hand, "You let me make that four-day trip, worried sick about Mother—"

"Well, would you have come if I'd wired anything else?" asked Jim, his bold eyes looking her up and down.

"No, I wouldn't, and I'm going right straight back!" retorted Corn Blossom, furiously, "Of all the hateful tricks you ever did, Jim, this is the meanest!"

"Calm your speech, Corn Blossom," interrupted her father, "It was by my wishes that

Jim sent you a message. I told him to tell you to come home. I have plans for you."

Plans! At the word, Corn Blossom's heart missed a beat. Mr. Blake was right then, her father intended to marry her to Jim. She looked toward Jim and grew almost sick with loathing of him.

"You have been long enough in the White Man's school," her father continued, watching her intently, "Six months ago it was time that you came home, but when I asked the Agent at Albuquerque, he said you had gone away with a Navajo dog. Is this true?"

"No, not what you think!" Corn Blossom answered, with spirit, "I've got a good job in a fine College in the East, and I've been working my own way!"

Jim laughed. Corn Blossom whirled angrily on him again, but was interrupted roughly by her father.

"Silence!" he said imperiously, "Let all this be forgotten. Now that you are back, you will be married to Jim in the Spring—"

"But, Father, I don't love him!"

Again Jim laughed and now it was the Cacique's turn to fix his burning eyes on the girl.

"What is love but more of the white man's nonsense?" he asked, scornfully, "I tell you again, Juan Ako, the girl is not worth three

wagons of corn. Her head is too full of the white man's ideas!"

"You mean you're selling me to these men, like a mare or a—a sow?" challenged Corn Blossom, throwing caution to the winds and confronting her father. "I won't stay here! I'm going back to my job!"

"To that d——d Navajo, you mean!" shouted Jim, "Like Hell you are!"

"Be still!" thundered Juan Ako, "Leave my house, Jim, or remain a courteous guest in it." He turned to his daughter, and swept his cold eyes up and down her slender body, pausing now at the silken legs, now at the bare throat.

"Where is your modesty, Bold One?" he asked, at length.

"There's nothing immodest about this suit!" Corn Blossom heard herself answering hotly in English, "Everybody dresses like this—"

"Are you too good to use the language of your people?" interrupted her mother, "Your tongue is as unseemly as your dress."

"I didn't mean to be rude," Corn Blossom turned apologetically toward her mother, "Just be patient with me for a little while, I'll soon be gone."

"I told you before that you would marry in the Spring," Juan Ako spoke, serenely. "Go now into the inner room and put on a proper dress."

The calm tones seemed to close like an iron vise around Corn Blossom's heart. For a moment, the thought flashed into her mind that she had better run now for the door, for the sunny street outside, the Horse Trail, the station at Laguna. Her eye went unconsciously to the door, but Jim read her meaning and laughing leaned back against it.

"Oh, no, you don't, young lady!" he jeered, in English, "You're here to stay."

Rather than exchange further words with him, Corn Blossom picked up her suit-case to follow her mother into the inner room. It was ridiculous to be so frightened; these strangers were her own flesh and blood, her people. They could not wish her such unhappiness as to marry Jim, when she loved Wing Foot as she did. Tomorrow, as soon as they were a little better acquainted, she would explain everything, and her father would himself drive her down to Laguna Station to start East again.

"Give me your pocketbook," the Governor said, as she was passing him.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Give me your pocketbook," repeated Juan Ako, and before Corn Blossom could recover from her surprise, reached out and took the hand-bag from her nervous fingers.

"You are an Indian girl now," he said, and resumed conversation with the *Cacique*.

CHAPTER II

A SINGLE-RUTTED Reservation trail, covered in winter by twenty-foot drifts of snow and in summer by six inches of alkali dust, winds across the waste lands between Cheelan and Acoma Rock. Here and there it loops up crazily over the mesa-flank or runs like a drunken man along the very edge of the Canyon du Chelly. Along the rim came a dilapidated mail truck, driven by a grizzled old Navajo, Grey Man. On the front seat beside him sat Wing Foot, holding his suit-case across his knees.

The chief's son resembled in no way the occasional tall, spare Navajo rider who whirled his gaunt horse off the trail at their dusty approach. Dressed in warm brown suit, tan shoes, striped brown tie and felt hat, Wing Foot might have been a traveling salesman, or an agent for the new oil companies casting interested eyes toward the Indian Country, rather than one of her own come home at last.

Grey Man cautiously guided the shimmying wheels of the truck around a dizzy ledge on the

extreme edge of the Canyon rim. Wing Foot gazed down a thousand feet into the saffron and green chasm below with a fresh, ever-recurring surge of joy in its beauty, which the vast red gorge always brought to him. How good it was to be in the Indian Country once more, to see the familiar ruddy rocks again, the small yellow desert flowers, the black mesquite and twisted pinon, the far purple mesas shouldering the cloud-tumbled cobalt sky!

With screeching brakes, the truck came to an abrupt stop. Grey Man had swung it around a boulder almost on top of a small roadster hugging the inside of the trail. Leaping out, the chief's son strode forward angrily to berate its driver for leaving his machine in such a place. A girl looked up from the left front tire on which she had been working, and Wing Foot stared.

She was Judy. The Lady-With-Four-Names had matured into a calm and beautiful woman. Life had evidently tamed the effervescent spirit of the pretty tom-boy teacher of Chaco School. The outreaching instinctive sympathy which had characterized her manner fifteen years ago, seemed to have changed into a grave, yet kindly reserve. Rising quickly and brushing off the dust from her sport-suit, which proclaimed its origin far East as Albuquerque, she looked intently at the young Navajo.

"Why, Wing Foot!" she cried, her blue eyes lighting up with the old joyous smile, "I'd know you anywhere—from your picture in the papers!"

The chief's son regarded her searchingly, then stretched out his hand.

"You're the Lady-With-Four-Names!" he exclaimed. "No, it's Mrs. Walton now, isn't it?" he corrected himself, quickly, with a smile.

A look of wistful sadness flashed across Judy's face.

"No, it's still Miss Williams," she answered, and indicated the lettering on the roadster. "I'm still a school marm."

Wing Foot took the tire-iron from Judy's hand and began to work on the lugs. Judy sat down on the bumper-bar and watched him.

"Where are you teaching now?" asked the Navajo.

"—at Acoma Day School."

At her words, Wing Foot looked up quickly and then ducked his head to hide the expression of joy which he knew had flashed across his face. While he was framing a question, Judy surveyed him with approving eyes.

"So you're home at last, Wing Foot!" she said, "My, but the Navajos must be awfully proud of you."

"I don't think they know of anything to be proud," answered the chief's son, "They don't

read the papers much at Cheelan, you know."

"The trader does!" defended Judy, "Remember him—the crabby old fellow who always adored you inside? I never pass Cheelan but what he stops and talks me deaf, dumb and blind about what a wonderful chap you've become."

Wing Foot rose to take off the spare. A mellow glow warmed the young Indian's heart at the thought of Jim, old Chahi, his imperious father, Corn Blossom, the entire Indian Country.

"On your way to Acoma?" continued Judy, pleasantly, as Wing Foot rolled up the extra wheel. "I expect you're going to the betrothal?"

"What did you say?" asked Wing Foot quickly, from the road.

Proud to be the first to report important news of an old mutual friend, Judy answered gaily: "Surely you've heard? The Governor's daughter, Corn Blossom, is going to marry Jim, the *Cacique's* son. It's going to be a very impressive wedding—remember Jim at Chaco, bullying Earth-Tongue Jim?"

Wing Foot's face went grey under the bronze of his skin. So this was the reason for Corn Blossom's sudden departure from Thorpe! Not only was she faithless to him, but she had lied, concealing her true reason for going un-

der a veiled hint that her mother was ill! In his heart, the warm lightness froze into a numb leaden ache.

Noticing his changed expression, Judy leaned forward impulsively.

"I'm sorry—I've said something which has disturbed you!" she apologized, "I forgot you and Corn Blossom were childhood sweethearts."

Wing Foot looked up from the tire.

"No, not sweethearts," he corrected, steadily, "—just good friends."

From where he had been drowsing over the wheel, Grey Man opened one eye and shouted:

"Hey, you Navajo, come on—you're holding up the U. S. mail!"

Laughing, Wing Foot rose from the finished tire and began to collect the tools. The mail-truck chugged up and passed the roadster, swinging into the Cheelan road. Again Grey Man called impatiently. Wing Foot helped Judy into her car and the teacher smiled graciously at him.

"You're going to Acoma—let me give you a lift?" she offered.

Chin down and eyes sombre, the chief's son looked at his dusty hands a long moment before he answered:

"Thanks a lot, but I'm not going to Acoma, after all. I've changed my mind—I'm going

home," he added, raising his veiled eyes to her with a quiet smile.

Wing Foot turned away toward the mail-truck. Her eyes puzzled, Judy looked keenly after him, undecided as to whether she ought to call him back. The young Navajo's tone and manner had indicated clearly that he desired no sympathy from her, though his eyes had betrayed a profound hurt. With a sigh, the Lady-With-Four-Names started her motor and drove off down the Acoma trail.

CHAPTER III

Navajo Jim Morris came to the door of his Trading Post and stood looking about him in utter distaste, as was his midafternoon custom. The settlement of Cheelan drowsed in the pleasant warmth of the late November sunshine. The mellow rays, yellow now instead of glaring white as in June, struck a bright red gasoline pump which he had recently installed near the Post doorway and made it glow richly. Jim's roving eye fell on his newest possession with pride. With a gasoline filling-station and the telephone which the U. S. Forest Service had recently put through Cheelan, Civilization was surely coming to the Indian country. Tin can tourists instead of horse thieves, telephone wires instead of Apache war-drums! Grinning, Navajo Jim raised his eyes to the Bell sign which he had salvaged off a dust-heap near Gallup and hung above the entrance to the Post. "Connection with Western Union Telegraph Company," it announced importantly.

Jim's cheerfulness was, however, short-lived. He looked away from these indications of

progress to the big loom under the cottonwoods. Naibaldie, the weaver, had gone to sleep again, the shuttle in her hand. What with Cheelan getting more civilized every day, these lazy Navajos would soon eat him out of house and home! Notani's single hogan had multiplied amazingly during the years, like a colony of mushrooms sprung up overnight. Where there had been two families in the good old days, there were now seventy and everyone getting smart, too, haggling about prices of sugar and tobacco and threatening to market their wool and lambs in Gallup when a man tried to take a penny's fair profit now and then!

With a profound sigh, Navajo Jim turned his eyes toward the Reservation trail leading to the outside world and to Gallup. Grey Man and his rickety truck were long over-due and Jim wanted the mail. There was always the chance that there might be a picture postal card from a sociable tourist-party gone on their care-free way, or some advertising pamphlets or maybe an offer from one of those wide-awake motion picture companies in Hollywood, reputed to be always on the lookout for promising talent to make into Western stars like Tom Mix.

Down the single track road came whirling a dusty touring car. Navajo Jim looked at it, rubbed his eyes, and looked again. The auto-

mobile sped down the grade across the canyon wash, coasted up to the Post, stopped abruptly and revealed two white men on the front seat. Rubbing his thin hands, the trader hastened forward to greet the newcomers.

"How dye, strangers!" he called.

From his seat beside the driver, one of the men got out stiffly and approached Jim. He was a bluff, red-haired man, with hearty self-confidence radiating from his well-fed person. He wore no collar, but had pinned his boldly striped tie onto a red monogrammed shirt with a flashing diamond cravat pin. Bull throat and hairy red chest exposed, he extended a fat red hand.

"Hello, trader!" he boomed jovially, "How's business?"

Navajo Jim beamed and shook hands. From behind the wheel, the second stranger swung a leg down and came lurching over to join them. He was a dark, silent man, big-bodied and powerful, with cheeks blue-black under two days' beard. His dark eyes were as quick as his body and seemed to take in the Post, Jim, Cheelan and the entire Backcountry in one swift, but scarcely noticeable glance. Navajo Jim felt suddenly that he did not like this stranger and wished that he had run out of gas ten miles back.

The bluff red-haired man was extending his card.

"My name's Anderson, Harry Anderson, from Albuquerque," he introduced himself, "Oil's my line."

Navajo Jim looked politely at the card and waggled it in the direction of the filling-pump.

"Sorry, gentlemen, but I've already made my connections with the Standard—"

"Hell, we're not selling oil—we're hunting it!" interrupted the dark stranger, rudely.

Navajo Jim swung around and squinted up at the speaker.

"Oh, yuh are, are yuh?" he snarled, "Say, young feller I didn't quite git yer name—"

"Barret, you dried-up desert rat!" snapped the dark man, "An' what's more—"

"Oh, shut up, Barret!" cut in the bluff red man, turning soothingly toward Navajo Jim, "Don't pay any attention to him, trader, he's had a hard ride. I'm the one you want to do business with, he's just helping me over the rough places. Look here, Pardner, ever see John Walton coming through these parts on one of those surveying trips of his?"

His attention successfully diverted from Barret, Jim turned back to Anderson.

"Well, maybe," he acknowledged, grudgingly.

Anderson's fat red cheeks rounded into a smile.

"Good!" he continued, with a careless glance at his companion. "There'll be a trip for you as guide, if you'll 'phone me the next time Walton comes through here. I'm in Albuquerque. Here, keep my card."

From over the hill came the rattle of an approaching car. The two strangers again exchanged significant glances.

"Well, we'll be moving on," concluded Anderson, "Don't lose that card, trader, and remember to 'phone me the minute Walton comes along—if you want a soft job wrestling two dudes into the Backcountry!" he finished, with a jocular wink.

The strangers got into their car and whirled off toward the canyon. Jim stood in the road beside the pump and watched them depart, so interested that he did not notice the approach of the mail truck. With radiator steaming, the dilapidated automobile coasted down the grade and stopped before the oil-pump. Its fender gave the trader a gentle bump in the rear. Startled, Jim swung around and his elbow touched the hot iron.

"D—n you, you lazy, good-fer-nothin' desert coyote!" he swore, shaking his fist and nursing the elbow with his other hand.

"Get out of the road, then!" answered Grey

"GOOD-BYE, CORN BLOSSOM. I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU."

A Paramount Picture. *Redskin.*

Man, "You're obstructing the U. S. Mail."

"Say, can't you think up a new joke?" the trader responded, peevishly, "That's the trouble with you Injuns. The minute us Whites tolerate yuh around an' give yuh a good job, this whole Backcountry ain't big enuf to hold yuh. I'm plumb fed up on modern Injuns—almost wish I'd kilt you all off when I furst come to Cheelan!"

"Is zat so?" answered Grey Man, sorting out periodicals, "Too bad my father begged for your life that time we had pinon piled all over your front porch!"

Disconcerted, Jim glared at the young Navajo who was lifting his suit-case from the front seat.

"Don't yer know him, Jim?" asked Grey Man, as he started the truck.

Wing Foot put down his suit-case and came forward. The trader watched him keenly. Tall, erect-shouldered, lean flanked, the newcomer might have passed for any one of the hundreds of handsome young Indians graduated each year from the Government Schools, except that his eyes looked out from his bronze face with an unsmiling, wistful steadiness, very different from the cock-sure arrogance of the average young buck Navajo. This expression in the youth's warm brown eyes caused an immediate sympathetic stir in the trader's

soft old heart. Jim leaned closer, staring.

"Why, you're Notani's boy, Wing Foot!" he cried, his face breaking into a smile like afternoon sunlight falling across a cliff.

"Hello, Jim!" answered the chief's son, extending his hand.

"Gee, boy, but it's good to see yuh!" continued the trader, his thin old fingers tightening in a hearty grip over the Navajo's bronze ones. "Yuh sure done us proud, sonny, in that big race! I been readin' all about yuh in the papers."

His arm about Wing Foot's shoulder, Jim led him toward the Post. In the yard, he paused.

"Stay here, an' I'll call yer Pappy an' the rest of 'em," the trader said, putting down Wing Foot's suit-case which he had appropriated as the mail-truck drove off.

Lurching on his high-heeled boots, Jim moved to the corner of the store and shouted:

"Hey, you Injuns, come see who's here!"

Not content with this, he hurried around the Post toward the settlement to fetch them himself. Left alone in the sunny yard, Wing Foot looked curiously about him. There were the old cottonwoods, their thin silken leaves heavy with alkali dust. There was the familiar hitching-rack with small Navajo ponies drowsily nipping flies. From it stretched the deep-

rutted wagon-road across the canyon wash. Behind him rose the log walls of the Post, with its out-buildings grouped here and there where need had placed them. How small they looked now, that had once seemed so big to baby eyes!

Wing Foot swung around to look at the settlement across the road. A long line of new hogans stretched along the sky-line of the baked brown hills. Before them were all the vivid indications of Navajo life. Burros watched from picturesque corrals of pinon poles whitened like ancient giants' ribs. A naked child rolled in the dust with a fat puppy. A comely Navajo woman in velveteen blouse and voluminous calico skirt was stretching a newly woven blanket on her hogan roof for sun, rain and wind to weather it. Over the hill-crest above, a wagon creaked out of sight, to be followed by a flock of sheep which came into silhouette and flowed down toward the settlement in a broad living stream of wooly backs. Over everything hung the fragrance of pinon smoke intermingled with alkali dust, the pungent never-to-be-forgotten smell of the Indian Country.

Wing Foot drew in a deep breath of pleasure, and turned back toward the Post. In the shadow of its low eaves sat Man Hammar, the tools of his craft scattered about him, his small anvil gripped strongly between the soles of

his yellow-moccasined feet. Age had whitened his hair, dimmed his eyes, weakened the once-powerful arm now hesitantly shaping a bracelet over the anvil. With a smile Wing Foot stepped closer and stood looking down at his father's friend. Man Hammar did not glance up from his work.

"*Yat-tay, Sakiess* [Friend]!" Wing Foot greeted him in Navajo.

Still the old silversmith did not trouble to look up. Pounding irritably, he grunted:

"Go 'way, Traveling Man! Old Injun no want to buy anything today."

With a chuckle, Wing Foot realized that Man Hammar mistook him for a drummer. The chief's son stepped forward so that his shadow fell across the anvil.

"Navajo, have you no greeting for a Dine-man?" he asked with dignity, and his hand went to his heart and outward in the ancient salute of his people.

Man Hammar stopped work and peered up from under shaggy white eyebrows. Into the filmy eyes dawned gradually the light of recognition.

"Wing Foot, thou son of Notani!" he cried in Navajo, his voice quavering noticeably with excitement.

Extending both hands, Man Hammar struggled stiffly to rise. Wing Foot gripped his

wrists, pulled him up, steadied him, stood smiling into the old man's eyes.

From the settlement the Navajos whom Jim's shouts had aroused, were hurrying down toward the Post. A group of men came first, followed by plump matrons with excited youngsters clinging to their skirts, little girls, shy maidens, old women. A pack of small Navajo urchins appeared seemingly from nowhere and swarmed down like a legion of ragged imps from Hades. Fearful of missing something, several horsemen on the hill-crest pounded down, bringing a small avalanche of dust and shale after them. Dogs barked, pandemonium reigned. In the corrals, burros threw up their heads and brayed a welcome to the chief's son.

Notani led the excited throng. His bright blanket flapped about his ragged buckskin trousers, his long strings of turquoise beads hung awry. White-haired, yet as imperious as ever, he paused at sight of his son's well-tailored back and stared. Behind him hobbled Chahi, the medicine man. The old priest was bent and crippled with years, but Age had not robbed him of his primitive dignity and majestic bearing. At sight of Wing Foot's erect figure, he stopped, whispering his astonished disapproval to Notani:

"Why, it can't be Wing Foot—after all I taught him!"

Without answering, Notani hurried forward to the door of the Post and stood looking coolly at his son. Chahi followed. Behind their leaders, the Navajo men and women ranged themselves in a hostile, disapproving circle. With veiled and resentful eyes, they looked the prodigal up and down, from his shining tan store-shoes to his close-clipped, sleek black hair.

With a quick catch in the beat of his heart, Wing Foot turned. All that he could think of was that he had come home. The lonely child at Chaco, the growing youth at Phoenix, the successful athlete at Thorpe gave way now to the Redman returned at last to his people. During these bitter years of struggle, he had been dreaming with all the intensity of his deep and silent nature of this moment, when he could stand before his father and his tribe, come home at last with Honor. The dull ache which had gripped his heart since he had heard of Corn Blossom's betrothal, relaxed for the moment. Stepping toward Notani, he thrust out his hand.

"Hello, Dad!" he cried, his face breaking into a joyous smile.

Notani did not answer. His eyes were taking in the young Navajo, the bright tan shoes, the silk hose, the well-made brown suit, the brown and red striped tie. Up past the soft collar the

Chief's cold scrutiny traveled slowly to the young Navajo's face, noted the square lips, the bronze cheeks chiseled into hard smooth planes by decent living, the straight nose, the steady warm brown eyes, unsmiling now, puzzled and hurt by the welcome he was receiving. In Notani's heart was stirring an unnatural resentment against this handsome stranger, this prodigal son of his who now knew so much more than he did, who had been away to the white man's school who could read and write and probably figure, who had met the white man and come off with honor, from the accounts he had seen in the newspapers which the trader had jubilantly translated.

Hurt by the open antagonism in his father's eyes, Wing Foot stood with a set and expressionless face. His chin was up, his teeth clenched, his eyes steady. Regarding his father with the level gaze with which experience had taught him to confront Life, he withdrew his outstretched palm, touched his heart and extended it outward in the ancient salute of his tribe. For Natoni to refuse to answer this greeting would mean the most deadly insult Navajo father could give,—a public refusal to acknowledge the youth as his son.

"Yat-tay, Dine!" said Wing Foot, slowly, his hand upraised.

The contemptuous expression in Notani's

eyes grew more kindly at the stately Navajo words. At least this boy of his knew how to look a man in the face! Softening, the Chieftain returned his son's salute, and answered:

"*Yat-tay,* my son! What name have you earned now?"

At Notani's words, an expression of surprise flashed across Wing Foot's face. Surely at Cheelan they did not still remember that early incident at Chaco, that shameful name long since wiped out in the honor which he had as an athlete gained for himself and the Redman? Chin lifting slightly, he answered with coolness:

"My friends call me Wing Foot. Why do you ask?"

From around Notani's shoulder, Chahi glided forward. The medicine man had been peering at Wing Foot with age-dimmed unblinking eyes. Like Notani and the older Navajos behind them, Chahi unconsciously resented Wing Foot's clothes, his poised ease, the superior education and broader experience which the chief's son had gained during his enforced stay in the white man's world. Hearing the youth's direct question, Chahi frowned.

"At Chaco, we heard that you are known as *Do-Atin* among our people!" he answered, sternly.

Wing Foot's eyes hardened with anger. He

was on the point of retorting when a shout sounded behind him. He looked around involuntarily. The pack of ragged little Navajo boys had discovered Wing Foot's suit-case. With shrill cries of derision they pounced upon it and tore it open. Snatching out collars, ties, a shaving set and a pair of striped pajamas, they danced gleefully about with the pilfered articles. One put on the pajama coat, another wiggled his arms into the trousers. An impish lad of ten looped a fresh white collar around his neck, seized the set of toilet articles, pretended to lather his face and to shave himself, a duty never divulging on an adult Indian whose beard is plucked gradually as he reaches manhood. Discovering the handsome trophy cup which Wing Foot had won at Thorpe, another child raised it to his lips and made as if to drink from it. Other boys noticed the gleam of the silver and gave chase to take it away. One especially mischievous little fellow found a tooth brush, squirted dental paste about his mouth, rubbed it into a foam and pantomined coarsely as if brushing his teeth. Spitting toward Wing Foot, he cried scornfully:

"See what our *Do-Atin* has brought home! Our *Do-Atin* has become a white man!"

At the shameful name, Wing Foot flinched and shot a swift glance toward his father and

the tribe. Notani and Chahi stood looking at him with open contempt written in their eyes. Neither made a move to rebuke the child. Behind their leaders the faces of the Navajo men and women showed plainly that they too shared the urchin's feelings toward the returned youth. Their eyes openly mocked him, their lips curved into faint smiles of derision.

As he read in their faces what his people thought of him, Wing Foot was hurt to the quick. Chin up and shoulders back, he stood before the tribe, receiving their veiled ridicule and the boys' open mockery with stoic indifference. So this was his home-coming, the great moment for which he had been longing and striving for years!

The child with the trophy cup had been doubling about the yard, followed by the howling youngsters who were trying to take it away from him. Looking back at his pursuers, the boy did not see where he was going and crashed full into Wing Foot's knees. The chief's son took the cup away from him and handed it to Man Hammar.

"Make me a belt out of this," he said, quietly.

The old silversmith took the cup and examined it curiously. Noticing the engraving, he fingered the words.

"What does it say?" he asked, peering up at Wing Foot.

To escape the level gaze of the tribe, Wing Foot dropped down on one knee before Man Hammar, and read the words:

To the Swift
Thorpe College
Field Day, 1928

At the quotation below this inscription, Wing Foot paused and smiled.

"What does that say?" insisted Man Hammar.

"For the young men, running ahead," Wing Foot read the ironical words, "—shall lead the armies to battle."

With a contemptuous grunt, Man Hammar laid the cup on the foot-anvil and struck it a resounding blow. Stroke after stroke fell on the soft metal, flattening it down into shapelessness. Wing Foot rose from his knee. Around the corner of the Post came Navajo Jim, puffing and breathless from the hogans. At sight of the urchins still playing tug-of-war with Wing Foot's pajamas, the trader caught up a switch and hurried forward to beat them off. They scattered immediately, carrying the wrecked suit-case with them. Gathering up

several collars and ties, the trader turned regretfully toward the chief's son.

"The danged lil' red devils!" he swore at them, "They kinda mussed up yer duds, I'm afraid, but yuh mustn't pay no attention to 'em. You was like that yurself once, sonny, before yuh got eddicated."

Humiliated and cut to the quick though he was, Wing Foot refused to show his hurt to the white man. At Jim's words, he laughed shortly and answered with indifference:

"The white man's ways are nothing to me now. Where is Old Yina, my grandmother?"

Navajo Jim shot a glance of admiration at the chief's son, an unspoken tribute to the youth's pride. Anxious to get his young friend away from the contemptuous eyes of Notani and the other Navajos, the trader moved forward with alacrity.

"I'll show yuh, son," he volunteered, "She's livin' up the canyon now—they've stuck the pore ole lady 'way off by herself."

Taking Wing Foot's arm, Jim lead him hastily toward the canyon wash. In silence they crossed the yard under the cold gaze of the tribe and strode off down the sandy road between the towering walls of Canyon du Chelly. With a nice sense of consideration for what the chief's son must be feeling, Jim talked volubly of business, the occasional tour-

ist drifting into Cheelan, the weather. At length they reached a hogan standing in a patch of emerald green under the thousand-foot saffron cliff. Like a weather-beaten and deserted bird's nest, the rude dwelling stood in lonely isolation. Rains had washed away the mud walls and caused a roof-beam to cave in, leaving a yawning hole mended by a worn-out buffalo hide. No signs or sounds of life came from within except a thin spiral of smoke curling up through the broken roof.

Wing Foot paused on the weed-grown path and looked thoughtfully at his grandmother's house. Fifteen years ago he had been torn from Yina's hearth and heart by Walton's hands. Here at his feet was gravel and flinty ground similar to that against which she had struck her forehead and hands, wailing in agony of spirit at the loss of her beloved manchild. How would she receive him, now that he has returned a white man, in appearance and, who knows, perhaps in thought?

"I'll leave yuh here, son," Jim's sympathetic voice broke into Wing Foot's thoughts, "Come see me at the Post whenever yu've got a mind to—the sooner the better fer me!"

Without waiting for an answer, the trader turned and trudged back toward Cheelan. The chief's son drew a long breath to summon his courage and stepped toward the door. Knock-

ing, he waited but heard no answer. Stooping, he entered the hogan.

By the smouldering fire, an old Navajo woman of ninety years sat rocking back and forth in the dim light of several beams which fell from the holes in the roof. She was Yina. Wing Foot groped his way through the smoky gloom to her and knelt.

"Yina, my mother!" he whispered in Navajo, and took her withered old hand gently between the firm warm hands.

"Who—who are you?" quavered the old voice, and her hands groped for his face in the darkness. As the gnarled fingers swept over his features, they began to tremble with excitement.

"I'm Wing Foot. Don't you remember me?" the youth whispered, "I'm Laughing Singer's boy."

"Child—child with my daughter's eyes!" cried the old woman, and her hungry arms found him, circled about his neck, drew his head to her breast. Straining him to her heart, Yina rocked back and forth with the age-old motion of primitive joy and despair.

Tears running down his cheeks, Wing Foot raised his head at length to look at his grandmother. Though Corn Blossom was faithless and Notani ashamed to acknowledge him, old Yina still remembered and loved the lonely

little boy she had raised and lost years ago. With a happy smile flashing through his tears, he gazed up at the wrinkled and kindly old face. Slowly the glad light in his eyes changed to astonishment, then to distress, as he perceived why she had received him with open arms. In a shocked whisper, he spoke:

"Why, you're blind!"

Yina raised her sightless eyes to the beams of light slanting in from the sunset sky outside.

"Aye, but the *Yebechi* be thanked, cruel though they be!" she cried out her gratitude to the Heavens which had afflicted her. "They have brought you home at last to the old woman who nursed you!"

Shocked and numbed with sympathy, his own troubles forgotten, Wing Foot put his strong young arms about Yina's shoulders and held her to his heart. His grandmother would not stay long in his embrace, however, she wanted to see and talk to the returned one. With the pathetic groping movements of the totally blind, her fingers searched Wing Foot's face and neck, felt his strange clothes, rubbed his collar, fingered the rough wool of his coat. Puzzled by their unfamiliar cut, Yina asked anxiously:

"But, Notani? How did he receive you?"

Wing Foot's eyes grew troubled.

"I expected a welcome," he said, "I didn't get it."

Yina pondered the problem for a long moment. Then her seeing hands strayed over the lapel of his coat. Rising, she felt her way to a rough pine chest against the wall and knelt stiffly before it, beckoning to Wing Foot to follow. Her face sad with memories, Yina opened the chest and drew out a black velveteen tunic.

"Look, Eaglet—his wedding garment!" she whispered to the young Indian kneeling beside her, "Let Notani see you as himself, in the old Navajo dress!" she continued with a knowing but tender chuckle, "Then he will welcome you into his heart!"

"I wonder—Lord, I hope so!" answered Wing Foot, as he took the beautiful Chief's blanket which Laughing Singer had woven for him years ago, and began to examine it thoughtfully.

CHAPTER IV

On his return to Cheelan, Wing Foot chose to live with his grandmother under the towering Canyon walls rather than in the hogan where Notani's second wife ruled with her many children.

During the first days following his arrival, the chief's son stayed close at home, mending Yina's crumbling roof, gathering fire wood, collecting the sheep which afforded her scant sustenance, pondering over and over in his mind the swift upheaval in his affairs which had changed him almost overnight from the popular hero of a rich man's college in the East into a lonely Navajo shepherd combing the desert for errant ewes. As if he had locked the door and flung away the key, he closed his mind to thoughts of Corn Blossom, though his heart was like lead in his breast and the light gone from his warm brown eyes. Blind and not knowing her grandson's temperament, Yina noticed little.

Wing Foot put on the old Navajo costume the morning after his home-coming.

Try as hard as he could, however, he was unable to forget the ways of the white man. Desperately he longed for a hot bath, for his discarded tooth brush, for clean linen next his body. As it was, he went to the arroyo to bathe in yucca suds so frequently that he feared the Navajo boys might see him. He would have gone oftener, but he did not dare, because he knew that his father, the medicine man, and indeed all the older Navajos were watching his movements, doubtless with the sly, half-veiled antagonism which he had seen in their eyes on the afternoon of his return.

Rude as were the ways of Navajo life, Wing Foot found them easier to accept than his people's religious beliefs. As he listened to Chahi's endless mumblings over his prayer-stick for rain, or watched the initiation of children with pollen and corn-meal, Wing Foot found himself scornful of these ceremonies which were the very warp and woof of tribal life. When the torches cast fantastic shadows of the horned priests in the Ram Ceremony, Wing Foot found himself wondering if a few thoroughbred bucks might not do more to produce fine lambs than all these prayers and tying-on of eagle feathers. Although he himself would have denied it, Wing Foot was half a Christian.

The actual break came the third morning of

the Fire-Dance. Few showers had fallen during July and August, the rainy season for the Navajo Country, and there was no pasturage for the Cheelan flocks. The emerald patches of grass in the Canyon du Chelly had withered. Corn shocks stood thin and sear, with ears dried nubbins on which the kernels had scarcely formed. Any day the snow might come, hiding what scant fodder the weak ewes and lambs could find. Rain—rain—if only the gods that dwelt on the far cold heights of the San Francisco Peaks would send one life-giving torrential downpour so that there might yet be a little vegetation for starving animals and heavy-spirited Navajos before Winter closed its white grip over them!

In the middle of the night, Wing Foot was awakened by the drums of the Fire Dancers as they came winding up between the walls of Canyon du Chelly. Stepping outside the hogan, he watched the preparations for the ceremony. Hundreds of bronzed hands had brought logs which they now stacked in one great pile in the dried stream bed below Yina's hogan. The vast heap of pinon and cedar ready, the Navajos fell back into orderly semicircles. Four young medicine men with lighted torches took their places at each corner, and Notani stepped forward in front of the great mound of fuel.

At his nod, the youthful priests leaped to the monstrous pile and applied their torches. Tiny flames licked at the dried wood, a crackling ran through the resinous cedar and a long red tongue of fire shot suddenly upward. At the same time, the *Yebechi* drums began to throb in a deep pulsing rhythm like a giant's heartbeat. One by one priests and people started to chant a haunting melody that swept upwards in dull waves of pagan harmony to the high white stars undimmed by the fiery column beneath.

"Sit down," whispered Yina, drawing him to the ground outside the hogan door. "Look, the Fire Dancers are coming!"

Following the direction of her finger, Wing Foot saw a procession of priests snaking out from a black pocket of darkness near the canyon wall. Their bodies, nude except for loincloths, were painted white with sacred herbs and lime. Each carried an unlighted garland of twisted evergreen branches in his hands.

Led by the veteran Chahi, the long line of naked ghostly figures wove in and out across the canyon floor, approached the blazing fire and began to circle slowly about it in long shuddering movements which led them each time nearer to the flaming mountain.

"What are they doing?" Wing Foot asked

his grandmother. "They look as if they're afraid of the fire."

"They are," answered Yina, sadly. "They dread its bite on their bodies."

"What do you mean?" demanded the chief's son, turning toward his grandmother.

"The Fire Dance is the propitiation for our sins," explained the old woman in a reverent whisper, "Chahi and his priests suffer for us. They must light their torches at the central fire and whip them out upon each other."

Startled, Wing Foot looked back to the dancers. In the long shuddering movements which had characterized the opening of the dance, as those of a man gathering his courage to rush into the fire and then falling back in adject fear, Chahi was leading the now sweating line of glistening white bodies closer and closer to the towering mountain of flame. Even a quarter of a mile away, Wing Foot could feel its hot breath on his face.

Whirling his torch aloft, Chahi leaped among the crackling tongues of red agony and kindled one end of his garland. Springing out again, he turned to the man nearest him and lashed at his bare back with the flaming scourge. His action was the signal for the others to kindle their torches from the central fire or from Chahi's brand. In a moment the scene began pandemonium—a mad pagan spectacle

of unbelievable torment and fanatic ecstacy. The procession of ghostly figures changed into leaping white bodies chasing and flaying each other with fiery whips, lashing themselves in a frenzy of religious exaltation, running madly here and there to escape blows from their companions' flaming torches. Several priests more hardy than the others leaped into the central mountain of fire, to be dragged out and carried off limp and almost mortally burned by apprentice priests.

As long as the torches stayed alight, the fiery scourging continued. Before each man's brand went out, he flung it back into the central fire and collapsed exhausted in his tracks on the canyon floor. The first and last, Chahi hurled his guttering fagot from him, lurched unsteadily into the hot glow of the mountain of flame and raised his scorched palms skyward.

"Kuma, give us rain!" he prayed, the smoke enveloping him.

Watching from the hogan, Wing Foot felt a wave of religious feeling surging through his body. The barbaric yet magnificent spectacle which he had just witnessed, stirred him to the depths of his soul, awakening in him dim long-forgotten memories of his racial past, penetrating far below the surface civilization ages down into the infancy of primordial Man. As

he gazed fascinated toward the central fire, the smoke rolled away and he saw Chahi again.

"Kuma, save thy children!" pleaded the medicine man, his blackened hands straining heavenward, his heroic old torso marked by fiery stripes where the burning scourges of other dancers had seared through the white-wash of herbs, "Kuma, thou the All-One who dwells everywhere, on the mountain, in the river, through the forest, and over the plain!"

Watching, the eyes of the chief's son grew reminiscent. Instead of the fiery column, Chahi, the circle of silent Navajos, the black canyon walls, he seemed to see again the spanned arches of the vast Cathedral at Phoenix, the high, incense-clouded altar, the tall white candles burning at either side, the silver pipes of the great organ pealing forth its sonorous tones, the Franciscan priest stretching his arms upward in prayer:

"Our Father who art in Heaven—"

Again the blue wisps of incense drifted across the altar and passed away. When Wing Foot looked again, he saw only the familiar bonfire, the aged priest and exhausted dancers lying on the sand, the circle of Navajos quietly watching the ceremony. With a profound sigh, the Chief's son turned toward Yina.

"There's not much difference between the white man's religion and ours," he said, thoughtfully, "We both worship the All-One, in our own way."

Yina turned her gentle face toward him.

"Come within," she said, "You may have need of your strength tomorrow."

"Why?"

"You will find out soon enough!" answered his grandmother, and would say no more.

CHAPTER V

All night the tom-toms throbbed, the naked prostrate figures rose and danced, the silent tribesmen watched. Darkness gave way to dawn, sunrise, blazing noon, twilight, while Chahi and his priests wearily continued the intricate ceremonial. The great fire died, a thin spiral of blue smoke rose and melted into the pastel sunset sky. It was not rekindled during the second night. Chahi and his exhausted helpers had successfully passed the ordeal of the Fire, but there remained the other elements to be propitiated.

Mid-morning of the third day, while Wing Foot sat within Yina's hogan and Chahi led his apprentice priests in a stamping dog-step like the thump of raindrops on dried leaves, the old medicine man faltered. In a sudden paroxysm of pain, his hand went to his heart. Tottering, he swayed and would have fallen, had not Notani caught him and eased him gently to the sand.

"Bring him water!" commanded the Head-

man, imperiously, "Twice this morning I bade him leave the dance—"

"Aye, to younger men!" agreed Grey Hawk, the Singer, who considered himself next in line for the medicine robe.

Gulping down water from a gourd held at his ashen lips, Chahi motioned to his disciples to raise him higher against their knees. From his wrinkled parchment face, the eyes of the resolute old medicine man burned into Notani's coldly disapproving ones. For a long moment, the two wills clashed and then Chahi surrendered.

"Fetch Do-Atin!" he said shortly.

Grey Hawk rose obediently and went trotting up the path to the isolated hogan. In response to his knock, Wing Foot opened the door and stepped out. The young apprentice priest stepped back with an involuntary gasp of admiration, for it was the first time that he had seen the chief's son in the traditional costume.

Standing there with the bright sunshine streaming down on his rich black velveteen tunic, scarlet headband, soft yellow-grey buckskin breeches and heavy silver belt of embossed plates, Wing Foot resembled one of the heroic warriors of Chahi's legends. Around the bronze column of his muscular throat hung Laughing Singer's double strands

of perfectly matched turquoise beads, blue as flakes of the sky against the velvety black garment. One glance at the young priest's jealous eyes, and the smile died on Wing Foot's lips.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Chahi bids you come to the Council," answered the messenger and turned away.

The chief's son followed thoughtfully. When he stepped into the circle of watching Navajos, the drums ceased their pulsing throb. Chahi had recovered his strength and with Notani stood waiting in the center of the vivid ring. At sight of the handsome Navajo, they stared as Grey Hawk had done. Chahi recognized him first, his wrinkled old face lighting up with a proud smile. Wing Foot stepped before him and saluted respectfully.

"You sent for me?"

Exhausted from the three day ordeal, Chahi yet had stamina to pull himself up with a remnant of his former majestic bearing.

"Aye, my son!" he answered, solemnly, "My strength fails. The Council bids me name my successor."

Pausing for breath, Chahi gazed fondly at the chief's son, whom he had schooled since babyhood in the traditions and responsibilities of Navajo leadership. Before he could continue, the pain gripped his heart again. Closing his eyes, lest his disciples notice, he waited

until the paroxysm passed and then continued:

"Since you have come home, I have watched you closely!" he went on, "I have seen that your heart still beats true to your Tribe. No matter what else you are, chief's son, you are still a Dine-Man!"

Wing Foot shot a quick glance toward his father and the Council. They had all risen and stood gazing at Chahi. Unconsciously Wing Foot stiffened in anticipation of what lay ahead.

Pausing for breath again, Chahi slipped off the fine old Bayetta blanket which for fifty years had been the symbol of his office and held it in trembling old hands.

"And so, Do-Atin," he concluded, with great dignity, "I would change your shameful name for my name; your blankets for the holy robe of the *Yebechi!*"

Chahi stepped forward with the medicine blanket, as if to place it about Wing Foot. The chief's son straightened resolutely, raised his hand. With a significant glance at the medicine robe, he asked:

"Does this mean that I must tie the prayer-feathers to the rams' horns?"

"—aye, to bring us many and sturdy lambs!" answered Notani, his austere face relaxing into a smile as he regarded his son.

"Does this mean that I must paint with sand upon the earth?" asked Wing Foot.

"—aye, to call down the Holy *Yebechi* to save the sick!" cried Chahi.

"Then put back your blanket upon your shoulders!" Wing Foot declared, courageously, "For I cannot do these things."

Unable to believe his ears, Chahi stood staring at the chief's son, the medicine blanket hanging in his inert hands. Behind him, Notani looked at his son in utter astonishment, while Man Hammar peered at him open-mouthed from around the Headman's shoulder. The Council stirred, leaned forward, gazed at the handsome young Navajo before them as if they, not he, had gone mad.

"Wing Foot, it is my will!" The stern voice of Notani broke the silence.

"Hear me, my father!" cried the chief's son, turning to face him, "I can't accept this blanket, feeling as I do. You can't ask me to preach to our people things which I do not believe myself! The day of the Ram Ceremony, the day of the Sand-Painting has gone. The old spirits are dead, the sun of our mighty past is forever set. And no dawn shall be ours—no rising sun—unless we ourselves awaken to the new spirits that have come into the Indian Country, to the new ways—"

"—the ways of the white man?" interrupted Chahi, his eyes blazing.

"Yes, the good ways of the white man!" cried Wing Foot. "Instead of the Fire-Dance, we need irrigation projects. Instead of Sand-Paintings, we need hospitals and Trachoma clinics, nurses and doctors!"

"Listen to him!" jeered Man Hammar, suddenly, "Do-Atin wants to be a white man!"

Wing Foot whirled furiously on his father's friend.

"I am no white man!" he blazed, "A Redman I was born, and a Redman I want to die!"

Chin up, teeth clenched, hands balled into fists, the chief's son stood struggling to regain his self-control. Slowly into his face dawned the look of spiritual leadership which had illumined it that bitter night at Thorpe when he had resolved to put aside the white man's world to return to his People. Throwing up his hands, he faced the Tribe.

"Hear me, Dine-Men!" he cried, desperately, "Have I not cause to hate the white man, I who am known throughout the Indian Country as Do-Atin, the Whipped One? Hating him, have I not gone out to meet him in his own world and beaten him honorably in sport? Hating him still, have I not turned my back on his offers of wealth and returned to my blood? Yet much as I hate him, and love my own, I

know that his ways are good ways, that his automobiles cover the desert faster than our fastest ponies, that his irrigation projects will give us rich crops, that his hospitals and and clinics will save our wives in childbirth, our mothers from blindness—"

"Silence, Do-Atin!" shouted Chahi, as he heard these words which struck at the very heart of his life's profession and faith, "The white man has tamed you!"

"You are the blind ones, Navajos!" cried Wing Foot, raising his arms again to still the angry exclamations which rose here and there among the Council, "Turn your faces from the past, open your eyes to the future!"

"Silence, Do-Atin!" Chahi shrieked again, beside himself with rage, "Save your whining speech for the white man, not for my tribe!"

As he concluded, the medicine man hobbled forward and struck Wing Foot savagely across the mouth. The young Navajo leaped back, hand to his lips. Above the bronze fingers, his eyes blazed at the infuriated priest.

"You old devil!" Wing Foot cried, distinctly, "You killed my mother with your damned witch-doctoring!"

At the accusation, Chahi fell back aghast. Notani moved furiously. The Council started forward with angry cries:

"For shame, Do-Atin!"

"Sacrilege!"

"Impious One, may the *Yebechi* strike you dumb!"

Notani strode forward, jerked the blanket from Chahi's numbed hands, and threw it to the ground.

"Do-Atin, you are no longer son of mine!" he began, in a voice thick with passion, "Get you gone from Cheelan, and never let me see your coward's face again!"

At his father's words, Wing Foot's face grew cold and expressionless. The Headman raised his moccasined foot and kicked sand onto the medicine blanket intended for his son. Chin up and shoulders erectly back, Wing Foot watched. Drawing his blanket level to his eyes, Notani beckoned to the Council to follow his example, and turned away from his son.

One by one, the Cheelan Navajos moved forward to obey. In single file they passed before the chief's son, scuffed sand onto his blanket, looked contemptuously into his set face and covered their eyes from the Tamed One. Too proud to show his hurt, Wing Foot stared back at them during the long ordeal. Only when Grey Hawk spat at him did he shift his gaze to the saffron-hued canyon wall and the cloud-tumbled cobalt sky above the jealous youth's head.

The last moccasined foot kicked sand onto

the almost-buried blanket, the last Councilman turned scornfully away. The ceremony over, Notani came forward again, leading an unsaddled buckskin pony by a raw-hide strap. Without speaking or lowering his blanket, the Headman thrust the rope into his son's hands and turned away.

Throughout the ordeal of expatriation, Chahi had stood looking at Wing Foot. He had taken no part in shaming his young friend's blanket. As the chief's son was turning away, Chahi tottered forward, raising his arms Heavenward in a gesture of despair.

"Woe to you, Do-Atin!" Chahi wailed, "that you went to the white man's school! Your body has come home, but not your heart."

With clenched fists, the old priest beat against his sunken breast. The tears streaming down his cheeks, he finished the curse:

"And now you shall wander forever alone, tribeless, neither good Indian nor white man —*just Redskin!*"

At Chahi's concluding words, the chief's son unconsciously winced. An expression of utter loneliness flashed momentarily across his face as he realized the truth behind Chahi's bitter cry. Jaws locked, eyes staring steadily ahead, Wing Foot turned his face downstream and leading the buckskin pony, left his tribe without a backward glance.

CHAPTER VI

Winter already in his heart, Wing Foot rode to Gallup during the first snow flurries of November. Much as he hated to re-enter the white man's world, he had to live. Penniless, without even a blanket, he dared not face the bitter Arizona winter in the desert.

Arrived at the busy little border town, once a double row of saloons on the edge of infinity and now a prosperous railroad center since the Santa Fe had established divisional headquarters there, the chief's son went to a bank affiliated with the Cheelan Trading-Post, through which his father had sold thousands of sheep and tons of wool. Instead of the jovial cashier whom Wing Foot knew, a strange ferret-eyed man stood behind the teller's cage.

"Mr. Cameron has left our employ," he answered Wing Foot's question courteously, "Is there anyone else whom you would like to see?"

"Whom could I see?" Wing Foot asked, directly, "I am looking for a job."

"I'm sorry," the cashier replied, his keen

blue eyes resting momentarily on the double strings of fine turquoise which Wing Foot wore, "We are limiting our employment to Americans only."

Wing Foot turned his head to hide the ironical smile which unconsciously curved his lips. To his surprise, he heard himself answering calmly:

"I am an American."

The cashier shot a quick glance at the young Navajo, and smiled pleasantly.

"Yes, but not in the sense I meant!" he remarked. "By the way, I'll give you fifty dollars for those turquoise beads you're wearing," he added, casually.

"Thanks, they're not for sale," answered Wing Foot, and walked away.

The Santa Fe railroad gave him employment for ten days on a section of new track. He and fifty other Navajos were laid off on Christmas Eve. With most of his earnings, he purchased a blanket, thinking as he laid down thirty dollars for it that the patient Navajo woman who had carded the wool and woven the bright-hued pattern had probably considered herself fortunate to receive a third of that amount. Checking the thought, for the chief's son realized that bitterness was creeping into his heart, he slung the blanket across his shoulder and went to see Voorhees, the sheep-man.

"I want a job herding sheep," he said, confronting the stocky little German, "I know every foot of the Backcountry, so I'll take care of them."

Shrewd pig-eyes agleam, Voorhees studied the powerfully built Navajo before him.

"Vot is your name?" he asked at length. "Seems to me I haf seen your face in de newspapers."

"Never mind my face, or my Navajo name," Wing Foot answered curtly, "Call me Jim or Bill—anything you want. I'll take just as good care of your sheep."

"You speak English vell," observed Voorhees, "Dat's de Indian vor you! Gif him a dam' fine education like dis Government gifs you, and vot you do vid it? You put on a blanket and go back to de desert to herd sheep. Bah! I haf no use vor you lazy Redskins!"

"A hell of a lot you know about us Redskins!" Wing Foot answered, hotly, and checked himself, "I beg your pardon," he added, "I want that job."

Voorhees laughed.

"You're no fool, vor all my talk!" he answered, "Tventy dollar a month—and you feed yourself. Here, gif dis to my foreman."

Wing Foot took the scribbled memorandum, said good-bye to Voorhees and left the office.

The desert swallowed him—the vast Ari-

zona waste-lands where the snow falls fifteen feet and the wind piles it to fifty across the trails, making death-traps of the arroyos—the Navajo Backcountry of endless distances, where horse and rider may travel two hundred miles and seem never to have moved at all. Huddled with his sheep into what shelter boulder or canyon crevasse offered, he lived like the animals he was herding, except that they fared better because of their woolly coats than he did. Without his blanket, he would have frozen to death. Once a month he watched for the supply-wagon which sold him flour, "jerkie" and an occasional sack of coffee or tobacco at exorbitant prices. Voorhees' son-in-law, a plump red German youth, brought him his wages in silver and painstakingly counted his flock. Except for these events, he lived the life of hundreds of other Navajos on the range.

Late in January, a nostalgia to see Cheelan swept over him. Leaving his flock in the care of a shepherd from the Lukuchuchu Tribe, he trudged through the white drifts to the log Trading-Post at the snow-sealed entrance of Canyon du Chelly. It was twilight when he arrived and the store empty except for the sharp-eyed old trader. Wing Foot had only fifty cents with him. He had meant to buy flour and food with it, but instead purchased two cigars.

Giving one to Navajo Jim, he lighted the other, sat down before the small, red-hot iron stove and smoked. Jim tilted his broken-chair against the wall, surveyed his young friend thoughtfully and smoked in silence.

"See that blanket up there?" Jim broke the silence of an hour's duration.

Looking toward the wall at the far end of the store, Wing Foot made out the warm glow of the fine Bayetta medicine blanket which Chahi had offered him, and Notani had shamed.

"It's yourn, whenever yuh want it," observed the trader, "After yer Pappy left, I picked it up."

Wing Foot made no reply.

"It's easy worth a thousand dollars," continued Jim, his sharp but kindly eyes fixed on his friend's face, "I think I could sell it easy in Gallup fer that."

"Ask Chahi—it's his," Wing Foot answered, casually.

"You Injuns ain't got this yere division of property worked out much better than us Whites," observed Jim, after a long pause, "It ain't right that your Pappy can freeze you out like this. You're jest as much entitled to feed yer stock on Cheelan grass as he is his'n."

"I know that," answered Wing Foot, guardedly, "The difficulty is I don't own any stock and he does."

"Well, how couldja?" the trader retorted, indignantly, "How's a fine progressive young feller like you ever goin' to get a start, with these ole fellows dead set agin him?"

Wing Foot did not answer. After another hour in the warm, dark room, the chief's son rose and departed, pretending not to see the bundle of food which the trader had wrapped up for him. What need had he for the white man's food, he who now lived as the coyotes lived, or the eagle which accepted nothing from any living creature? Comforted by his own proud independence, he went trudging back the eighty miles to Lukuchuchu.

Spring came at last to the Indian Country. Wing Foot watched the snow-drifts which had seemed so formidable six weeks before, dwindle and melt away into harmless patches of dirty white which in turn went trickling off through the red 'dobi. How good it looked, that rich red 'dobi of Arizona and New Mexico!

Slowly the desert awakened. Every day Wing Foot heard the thump of mating jack-rabbits, the honk of geese flying high and to the north. All the land was astir—was fragrant with blossoming cedar, that small white flower which grows on scrubby evergreen bushes, but has a breath lovelier and more lasting than honeysuckle or Confederate jasmine. Dog-tooth violets tossed their fanged heads

and were spotted with wet alkali during the torrential April rains. Bright yellow desert butter-cups, like miniature lilies, danced in a carpet of gold on the plateau. Everywhere was the smell of the moist earth unlocked at last from the grip of Winter. The mesas, the rock columns, the sage-spotted desert floor seemed to sparkle, as though the broad face of the Indian Country had been freshly washed for the coming of Spring.

In Wing Foot's heart, there was no awakening to the stir of joyous life about him. Living became easier, however, for the big jackrabbits grew careless during the mating season. Wing Foot was roasting one on his improvised spit one warm May evening when the rattle of a Ford shattered the twilight calm.

"Hello, sonny!" called out Navajo Jim's voice from the gloom.

"Hello, Old Timer!" Wing Foot answered, his tones full of eager welcome.

The trader guided his dilapidated car as near as he could approach over the rocks, got out and lurched to the fire. In his arms he carried a bristol-board box piled with groceries.

"You are just in time for dinner," the chief's son greeted him, taking the box and shaking hands. "Lord, but its great to see you!"

"It's mutual!" chuckled Jim, "Howdja winter?"

"All right. And you?"

"Rotten!" responded Jim, cheerfully, "Things got so dam' bad I decided I better make a tradin' trip into the Backcountry 'fore they tuck me to the pore-house. That junk thar," he continued hastily, as if fearful that Wing Foot would interrupt him, "—is jest some odd stock I couldn't sell. Wish you'd take it offa my hands, I hate like hell to lug it all the way back to Cheelan."

"Thanks!" answered Wing Foot, and turned the rabbit over. When Jim was not looking, he slipped a silver bracelet from his arm and dropped it unnoticed into the pocket of the trader's old fleece-lined coat. Jim's attention seemed focused on his left boot from the ankle of which he had rolled up his denim overalls.

" 'Pears to me like I got somepin wrong with this hoof," the trader observed, "Ever since that rattler nipped me in this boot last year an' I heard tell of the dude what passed on in Wyoming from wearin' a boot that a rattler had bit, I been listenin' for Gabriel's trumpet."

"He was a dude," answered Wing Foot, reassuringly, "You aren't good enough."

"Maybe," admitted Jim and rolled his overalls down over the boot again. "Hope you're

right, an' say, son, it sure sounds good to hear yuh crackin' jokes, again."

"—have some rabbit?" cordially offered the chief's son.

"Say, boy, fun is fun, but don't carry it too far!" admonished Jim, "I prefers my leather on my legs."

With an appreciative chuckle, Wing Foot sat down and ate his supper. Jim watched with shrewdly twinkling eyes. Once when the chief's son leaned forward to toss a bone into the fire, the trader's hand moved slyly toward the boulder on which the Navajo sat. When Wing Foot resumed his position, he found his friend lighting a cigarette.

"Here, I got some more," Jim offered him the smoke.

"Thanks."

They puffed in silence for a long moment.

"Well, whatcha gonna do, now Spring's here?" demanded the trader, at length.

"What is there for me to do?" asked Wing Foot.

"Go to Gallup, an' git a good job!" answered Jim, at once. "Mr. Cameron'll give you one, in the bank."

"I tried that!" observed Wing Foot, "The new cashier told me they were limiting their employes to Americans only, and tried to gyp me out of my turquoise."

"You don't say!" commented Jim, indignantly, "How much did he offer?"

"Fifty dollars."

"Hell, they're worth five hundred!" snorted the trader, irately. "Dam' these slick Easterners, al'ays tryin' to steal e'vything you Injuns own!"

"You notice I'm still wearing them," Wing Foot rejoined and flung the last bone into the fire.

"No, Jim, it's no good, this working for the white man!" Wing Foot went on, "They make me so mad trying to do me that it'll ruin my disposition. Sometimes I wonder too, like you're doing now, what's going to become of me. I know I'm drifting—"

"Aw, say, I didn't mean to git you all depressed!" the trader interrupted, anxiously, "You're jest a mite discouraged now from chawin' on that jack-rabbit—you'll be all right tomorrow, if yuh ain't dead."

Without answering, Wing Foot stared thoughtfully into the pinon coals.

"That's just what's the trouble with all us Indians," he said, at length, "We're men without a country—or a hope—or a tomorrow."

Jim shot a shrewd look at his young friend. Too wise to contradict him and too sympathetic to offer bromidic comfort, he remained silent, his eyes on the pastel sky. As soon as

sufficient time had elapsed for his departure not to seem uncomfortable, he rose.

"Well, so long, son!" he concluded, cheerfully, "Come down to the Post whenever yuh kin find time."

"I will!" answered Wing Foot, "Thanks for stopping by."

Jim was getting into the car, when he suddenly remembered something. Pulling a letter out of his vest pocket, he hustled back to the fire, and gave it to his friend.

"Gawd! I mighty near forgot what I come fer!" he swore, "I been holdin' this fer you fer a month."

Thrusting the crumpled envelope into the Navajo's hand, Jim hurried back to his car, got in and drove off. Wing Foot knelt by the fire to examine the letter. Looking curiously at the strange handwriting, he tore it open and read:

Dear Wing Foot:

I have had you on my mind ever since that day last November, when you turned back from Acoma because of what I told you.

Corn Blossom isn't married yet. She seems very unhappy, and needs someone to help her. I can't do it, so come if you possibly can.

Sincerely yours,
Judith Anne Mosely-Williams.

Scarcely daring to believe his senses, Wing Foot read the letter again. The phrase "Corn Blossom isn't married yet," seemed to leap up to meet him. "She seems very unhappy—come if you possibly can."

In his eyes, Wing Foot felt the hot sting of sudden tears, and found himself laughing. His heart, seemingly frozen in his breast leaped and sent the hot blood pounding to his ears. Like the winter snows, hopelessness and broken pride and anguish of spirit melted away. Corn Blossom loved him—she had not forgotten! And at last he was going to Acoma!

As Wing Foot leaped to his feet, his elbow swept the boulder against which he had leaned during supper. There was the clink of silver on stone. Stooping, he picked up the bracelet which the old trader had surreptitiously discovered and had refused to accept. Whistling so gaily that the hobbled buckskin raised his head to stare with curious amber eyes at his master, Wing Foot began to strike camp.

CHAPTER VII

THE bright June sunshine was bathing the wind-worn old Rock where the chief's son cantered up to the Rear Trail of Acoma. Above him towered the embattled heights, the Horse Trail spotted with figures toiling up and down. Pigmies moved here and there on the roof-tops against the sky-line. On its lofty island of rock, the city of sky teemed with early morning activity.

Wing Foot looked swiftly about for a place to ascend. A fissure of sandstone yawned to the left of the dune, and he whirled his pony toward it. Within the cut, thrifty Acoma husbandmen had built a sheep-corral; its moist black earth was still freshly cut by the sharp hoofs of recent occupants. Above the enclosure, a natural bridge spanned the chasm in an arch of rainbow beauty, with pale ochre and saffron water-marks streaming down like tattered ribbons over the soft rock. The chief's son concealed his pony behind a boulder, tethered the little animal securely, hid his rifle and

leaped upward, catching the bridge's span with his hands.

Running lightly across the arch, Wing Foot climbed aloft through the fissure toward the cleft of blue sky high above him. Half way up, he found that the crevasse which he was following led directly across the Horse Trail. A noise caused the Navajo to flatten himself swiftly against the narrow ledge on which he stood.

Up the Horse Trail, a train of burros loaded with pinon fagots, approached. Acoma men and youths were beating the unwilling animals up the steep old stone steps. Scarcely daring to breathe, lest the motion destroy his equilibrium and topple him five hundred feet downward onto the jagged spurs of granite below, Wing Foot hugged the crevasse and watched the fuel-train go by. Burros and men passed close enough to touch his shoulder. One inquisitive jet-black foal saw him, took a step forward and "woofed!" curiously. Noticing the laggard, an Acoma youth struck him on his round little haunches. The indignant small animal snorted and scrambled up the Trail after its dam. Not until the last boy and burro had moved out of sight did the chief's son dare breathe deeply again and wipe the sweat from his forehead.

After a careful look around, he darted across

the Trail into a chasm on the other side and continued his arduous climb. Lifting himself on his elbows, he looked over the mesa-top. He found himself almost touching the water at the margin of Acoma's secret drinking-pool. He had come up the crevasse, worn down the mesa's flank by rain and melted snow through centuries of overflow before the Acoma Indians had dammed up the natural water fall to form their life-giving and famous sky-cistern.

Wing Foot smiled, remembering old Yina's tales of the sacred pool. Every morning, old women and girls of the Pueblo came down to fill their water-jars at this natural reservoir in the rocks, which had made Acoma such a formidable stronghold. In the olden days the Peaceful People had piled corn and dried mutton in their store-houses and granaries in such quantities that, together with this water, they could resist siege for two and three years at a time. Out of this habit had sprung the Indian proverb: "The Pueblo plants for himself, his store-house and his enemy, the Navajo," and little Acoma boys dropping ten kernels of maize into neat hills of ploughed earth, chanted: "One for the North wind, one for the South, one for the East and one for the West, one for the badger, one for the store-house, one for the crow, one for myself and the Navajo!"

Wing Foot realized that his safest chance of

seeing Corn Blossom was to find or wait for her at the pool. Wiggling forward cautiously, he dodged behind a boulder and looked toward the pool.

A charming sight met his eyes. Held in its cup of rose-colored sandstone, from which the walls rose sheerly a hundred feet to the plateau's rim above, the water dimpled and sparkled in the bright June sunshine. A flight of worn stone steps, pale gold from age and usage, led upward from there to a wide flat rock extending like an ivory finger into turquoise water mirroring a bluer sky. Near the boulder where he crouched, was the deepest part of the pool. Here mosses grew upward from translucent depths and waved delicate emerald branches of a rich greenness rarely seen in the Indian Country.

On the finger of sandstone, a procession of Acoma women and girls, dressed in quaint native costumes of black body-cloth tied loosely over a vivid-hued full calico skirt and long sleeved blouse, moved to and from the water's edge. On their heads, under bright magenta, blue and scarlet Mexican shawls worn like Spanish mantillas, they carried large water-jars intricately decorated with saffron and black triangular figures. At the margin, a grey-haired matriarch knelt and dipped up water with a gourd, pouring it into the jars of

each woman as she walked out on the finger of sandstone and lowered her jar to receive her family's daily portion. Stately and colorful as a Greek chorus, the Acoma matrons lifted their filled jars to their heads and paced rhythmically back again toward the ivory-gold steps leading up to the trail and the Pueblo above.

Wing Foot leaned forward and scanned the faces of the matrons. Kindly and impassive, they moved by. As he watched, the Navajo's heart sank. Corn Blossom was not among them, and he dared not go into the sky town to search for her.

With a last despairing glance, Wing Foot looked toward the finger of sandstone. The matriarch was filling the last jar. Before her knelt a slender figure clad in black and green, with a black shawl hiding her face. In the weary droop of the girl's head and shoulders there was something familiar, a dear familiarity which sent the hot blood pounding to the Navajo's ears.

"Get up, Lazy One!" the matriarch scolded, shrilly. "To see you, one would think you the only girl on the Pueblo unhappily wed! Get up, before I tell your father."

The girl turned her head so that Wing Foot saw her face. She was Corn Blossom, yet so changed from the rollicking-eyed and merry

little Indian flapper of eight months ago, that the chief's son hardly knew her.

"Aye, mother, I will come," she said, wearily, "Go first, if you choose."

With grunts and moans, the matriarch rose stiffly, shook the last drops of precious water from her gourd into the pool again, and started up the path. Wing Foot watched with glowing eyes, as she climbed the steps and started slowly up the Trail. Below on the sandstone finger, Corn Blossom had lifted the heavy jar to her head and was approaching.

Wing Foot sprang to his feet and flattened himself against the wall past which the girl must come. As she drew nearer, he studied her. Shadowy-eyed and thin, the flower-like face had lost its piquant charm and joy of living. Docile surrender was written all over the slender body drooping under the heavy black and green dress. The girl seemed mortally tired, broken in body and spirit.

"Corn Blossom!" whispered Wing Foot.

At the sound of his voice the Acoma girl flung up her head. Her jar fell, crashing in fragments on the sandstone ledge and splashing water over their feet. Corn Blossom was staring at him, as at the ghost of one dearly beloved but long since given up forever.

"Wing Foot, it's you—at last!" she an-

swered in a dry whisper, "Oh, my dear, I've longed for you so!"

Putting his arms about her, the chief's son drew her to his heart. All the suffering of the past months, the misery of their separation, their longing for each other, seemed to melt in this first passionate embrace. Young bodies close, eager lips clinging, they forgot everything else in the world except that at last they were together. The winter of their love had gone, Spring was at hand!

As their lips parted, Wing Foot looked deep into the girl's lovely eyes and whispered:

"Corn Blossom, am I too late?"

With a flash of her old spirit, the girl laughed.

"You're just in under the wire!" she joked, through happy tears, "The main event comes off next week."

"It'll never come!" the Navajo commented tenderly, drawing her into a shadowed niche in the wall. "Tell me all about it, though," he added.

"The telegram I got at Thorpe was a lie!" the girl declared, cuddling into his arms as he sat down on a convenient boulder, "Jim wired me that Mother was dying because he knew that was the only thing which would make me come home."

"But why didn't you tell me?"

"I hated to distress you that night," she answered, gazing up fondly into his warm brown eyes, "When I got home Father took my money and locked me up in the house. Oh, I know it sounds improbable and silly to you, but you don't know this old Pueblo. It's horrible, Wing Foot, it's unbelievable that such things could happen nowadays in the twentieth century."

"I know," the chief's son responded, tightening his arms about the girl's shuddering body, "It hasn't been too easy at Cheelan."

"Tell me about yourself!" the girl asked at length, "When did you leave Thorpe?"

Briefly Wing Foot recounted his experience at the dance, the fight with Tom, his meeting with the Lady-With-Four-Names, his homecoming and disinheritance.

"While I was herding sheep this winter," he continued, thoughtfully, "I made up my mind what I'm going to do. Since I can't be headman of the Cheelan Navajos, I'm going to be a trader. The trader's the link between the old ways and the new. If I'm a trader, I can introduce new ideas and better ways of living. And what's more, I won't have to live like an Indian myself, yet I can still be on the Reservation."

"But, Wing Foot, how'll you ever get a Post?" asked Corn Blossom. "The license

costs something, doesn't it, and there's the stock to buy."

"I've figured that all out," answered the Navajo, confidently, "This winter I saved up seventy dollars and I'm going to buy a wagon and stock it from Navajo Jim's store. He seems to trust me and would probably take my turquoise beads in pawn to start me out. Of course, I can't trade among the Canyon Navajos, but there are a lot of Indians up near Lukuchuchu, Chee Dodge's people. I think they'll help us—"

At the tender word, the chief's son paused and looked down into Corn Blossom's uplifted eyes.

"Will you come with me?" he asked, solemnly, "It's not what we planned at Thorpe, or what I'd hoped I could do for you, but we'll have each other, and God knows I'll try. Corn Blossom, will you come?"

"Anywhere you say—to the end of the world!" the girl whispered, and raised her lips to his.

Unseen by them, a reflected shadow danced into the pool's sparkling surface. On the plateau rim across the cistern, a small bronze figure in blue breeches peered down curiously to see who the lovers in the niche might be. The boy was Kito, Corn Blossom's impish little brother, sent by the matriarch to find what was

keeping the laggard. At sight of the Navajo, Kito's jaw dropped and he stared, fascinated, at his sister in the handsome stranger's embrace. Then the child slipped away as silently as he had appeared. As if sensing the danger ahead, Corn Blossom released herself gently from the Navajo's strong arms, and stood up.

"Come, we must hurry!" she whispered, looking apprehensively about her. "Let me go ahead, I know the way better than you do."

Hand in hand, they ran up the steps, dodged into the friendly clumps of pinon, and hurried toward the Horse Trail, the only way down the mesa except the perilous climb by which he had come up through the crevasse. Leaping down the first flight of stone steps, Wing Foot found the way clear and called back softly to Corn Blossom. As she came, they heard footsteps on the broad curve just below them.

Wing Foot whirled to face the newcomers. Around the curve several men rushed up. As on signal, excited shouts rang out from above, there was a shower of pebbles, and a powerful young Acoma Indian, with a buckskin knotted about his broad shoulders, leaped down beside the Navajo. The Acoma youth was followed immediately by three other men armed with rifles and knives. Leaping down, they and their tribesmen from below formed a circle about the lovers, trapping them on the steps.

The Indian in the buckskin advanced belligerently, his rifle tilted.

"For shame, men of Acoma!" cried Wing Foot, "I come on an errand of peace."

"It looks like it, Navajo dog!" answered the other, sarcastically, "What business have you to come at all?"

"Oh, Steve, don't!" pleaded Corn Blossom, grasping at the youth's arm, "Wing Foot, be careful—he's the War Chief!"

Her warning came too late. Out shot the Navajo's fist, catching Steve on the jaw and knocking him off the trail to his tribesmen below. Before the others could close in on the chief's son, however, a swarthy face framed in untidy wisps of black hair, thrust itself over the ledge from above. The newcomer was Earth Tongue Jim. Twenty men from the Pueblo followed him. Dropping cat-like to the curve, he took in the situation with one sweeping glance. With a terrified cry, Corn Blossom crouched down against her lover's knees.

"So this is why you've been postponing our wedding?" Jim mocked her, seizing the shrinking girl and dragging her to her feet.

"Take her to her mother!" he commanded, pushing her roughly toward several of his tribesmen.

"Don't you dare touch her!" blazed Wing Foot.

"Shut your cowardly mouth!" Jim shouted, whirling furiously toward the chief's son. "This is the Navajo *Do-Atin,* the Tamed One. Even his own people have driven him out!"

Steve had sprung to his feet below, and came rushing up the Trail.

"Push him over the mesa!" he shouted, furiously, "—as we used to do his ancestors!"

Wing Foot glanced swiftly over the ledge of the Trail. Eight hundred feet below, rose the jagged rocks of the fissure up which he had climbed. He looked warily back at his assailants. Led by the crafty-eyed Jim, they were closing in about him. The one way out lay up the Trail, where her captors were dragging Corn Blossom. As quick as the thought, the Navajo's fist struck Earth Tongue Jim. The big Acoma man wavered and pitched headlong down the Trail onto the Pueblos below, giving the chief's son a few seconds start.

Leaping up the stone steps, Wing Foot ran for the city of the sky. Behind followed the Tribe, yelling, brandishing hoes, spades and rifles. Fearful of a bullet, the Navajo doubled into an alley and ducked across a corral full of astonished burros, which began to bray excitedly and raced up the main street.

Earth Tongue Jim was leading the pursuit. At his heels came Steve, the War Chief. The chase threw the sky town into an uproar. Old

men leaped out of forty-wink naps in sunny corners, women left their *metates* full of half-ground corn to run to the roof-tops and stare down at the fleet Navajo. Children shrieked, dogs barked. A fat matron shoveling fresh-baked bread out of a second-story oven, became so excited that she snatched up one of the hot crusty loaves and hurled it at the chief's son. Wing Foot dodged and the flying loaf went rolling on up the uneven street ahead of him like a miniature cart-wheel whirled off its axle.

Looking back over his shoulder, the Navajo saw that his enemies were fanning out to pocket him at the head of the village. Here the street fell off over the mesa-rim to the valley floor a thousand feet below. To attempt a descent here was suicide. Fleeter than the swiftest Acoma youth, Wing Foot raced forward, leaped up the kiva ladder, climbed the tiers of 'dobi to the topmost houses and ran along the roof-tops. Thwarted at the ladder below, Jim and the tribe stopped breathless.

"Go through the alley!" shouted the War Chief, "He'll have to jump into the Governor's yard!"

Wing Foot heard the shout and looked down. In the plaza below, Corn Blossom was being hustled into a saffron-tinted pueblo. Calculating the roof-poles beneath him, the Navajo

swung down on them with ape-like agility and dashed over to the ladder up which Jim's two friends had pulled the frantic girl.

"Corn Blossom, I'll come again!" he called up to her.

"No, no, save yourself!" shrieked the Acoma girl, struggling heroically in the grip of her captors, "You can't help me now—they'll only kill us both!"

From the alley, Jim and Steve came running. The thought flashed into Wing Foot's mind that here was Death, come to meet him in this white street of gleaming 'dobi houses hung with bright shawls and festooned with drying maize and peppers, here in the golden sunlight, with the laughing summer sky so close above. Here was Death, come for them both just when they had re-found each other!

"Wing Foot, save yourself!" shrieked the agonized girl above him, "Jump for the pool!"

The pool, deep and green, stretching cool arms of safety up to anyone who dared leap the hundred feet into its embrace! The Horse Trail blocked, it offered the only other way off the mesa top, for the water would break the fall, and he could scramble from its margin down through the crevasse by which he had ascended.

Turning, the chief's son swung up to the house-tops again, sped like a hare across them,

and raced for the worn stone pathway. Seeing his intention, his pursuers took a short cut and gained on him. Now he could hear their angry voices:

"*Do-Atin!*"

"Outcast from Notani's tribe!"

"Thief!"

Before him stretched the smooth water-shed down which rains and melting snow ran into the pool. Wing Foot leaped the wall which divided the sacred zone from the plateau and raced across it. At the rim, he hesitated and looked back.

In full cry behind him came the angry men of Acoma, shouting and hurling their weapons toward him. Behind rose the cream colored house-tops, with pigmy figures running frantically to see his fate. One slender figure broke free and waved a black shawl. With the hands of his pursuers almost upon him, the chief's son paused to wave in return and then leaped—

Wing Foot felt he would never touch the water. Blue-green depths rose suddenly and engulfed him. For a moment he choked and struggled in the grip of mosses, then rose to the surface and swam for the dam built across the fissure.

Jim appeared suddenly on the heights above, staring down. A moment later, the other Acoma Indians rushed to the edge and stood

gazing down, speechless. Shaking the water from his eyes, the Navajo drew himself out, vaulted over the dam and dropped out of sight down the crevasse.

Before the men of Acoma could descend by the Horse Trail, Wing Foot had reached the bridge and the corral. Snatching up his rifle, he flung himself on his pony, lashed at the excited buckskin with the end of his chin strap, and galloped off between the vast wind-worn columns at the rear of the crumbling mesa wall.

High on the roof-tops above, Corn Blossom watched the tiny speck racing across the golden valley floor below. Wing Foot was safe, but there was now no escape for her.

CHAPTER VIII

After he left Acoma, the chief's son turned his face northward to the Navajo Country, to the parched Arizona waste-lands, to the great Earth-Mother, all that is left to the Redman today.

Companioned only by his bitter thoughts, the Navajo let the pony pick his own way. He rode with eyes staring sombrely between the mustang's ears. He had no plans. He gave no thought to the future. At last he was *Do-Atin,* the Tamed One, a man without a country, or a hope, or a tomorrow.

Within his consciousness, unknown to his thoughts, were stirring the instincts and dim forgotten habits of his forebears, the predatory Navajos, who, in search of fair lands and sweet water, had early left the Caucasian cradle of the Athabastan Race; had wandered nomads across the Tartar Steppes; had pushed northwestward through the Lena and Kolyma River basins over the vast Siberian plain that slopes down to the Polar Sea; had crossed what is now Behring Strait on the narrow bridge of

rock that once joined Asia and Alaska; had followed the Pacific shore southward; had skirted the ice fields; had heard the Oregon; had pushed through mountain passes of Montana and Utah until at last they reached the Grand Canyon; until they came into the parched and beautiful Navajo country which is now theirs as long as they are able to survive within its lovely, sinister waste-land.

The Navajo country, so beautiful to the eye, so cruel to him who would live there! The Navajo country of endless distances, of intense heat and bitter cold, of drought and sandstorm, of driving wind and icy blizzard, ruled by a Nature so cruel and yet so fair that her Indian children would choose to die rather than to leave her gaudy rocks and far purple distances. As a lover to his mistress now cruel, now tender, as "Earth to her legendary son, he has but to fall down and kiss her breast and he is strong again."

Do-Atin rode northward past the three great rocks called Haystacks, past old Fort Defiance where Kit Carson's guns are silent, over Chinle Mountain, down its timbered slopes into Cheelan Wash, and up the Canyon du Chelly, where the age-old water marks trail downward in broad saffron ribbons over the ivory cliff-sides, and the prehistoric White Palace broods through the centuries over the puny efforts of

Man. If the Cheelan Navajos noticed him, they let him pass unhailed as another of the lean and taciturn nomads who ride the American Desert.

The heat grew intense. Horse and man began to suffer acutely from thirst. In the cloudless copper sky, the sun beat down in rays like hammer-strokes on the Navajo's head. Up the dried stream-bed between towering sun-baked walls, the chief's son rode with chin-strap hanging loose on his pony's gaunt and sweat-lathered neck.

In one of the remote fingers of the Canyon du Chelly, was an empty land, a lonely valley below the Echo Cliffs, unclaimed by man and locked still in the Early Silence. Old Yina had come a bride through this hidden valley and in after years had whispered tales to her wide-eyed grandson of how she had heard the hushed breath of the sleeping rocks as her husband led her southward. Now, with his pride broken and his heart like lead within his breast, *Do-Atin* longed for the dreamy stillness, the hushed beauty of that forgotten land. It was his as much as the white man's, whose ideas and education had made him an outcast among his people. It was his as much as Notani's, who had driven him from his tribe.

Stumbling through the snowy sand, the spent pony stopped at a sun-blistered water-hole.

WING FOOT RISKED HIS LIFE TO MEET CORN BLOSSOM.

A Paramount Picture.

Head low and hoofs bunched together in utter exhaustion, the horse could go no further. Slowly the forelegs of the mustang buckled under him. *Do-Atin* had barely strength to slip off as the pony lurched. Squaring himself on all four legs the hardy little animal braced and steadied himself.

Seeing the dried water-hole, the chief's son crawled forward and dug with his fingers in the hot sand. Despairing of moisture he sat back weakly on his heels. Thirst was overpowering him. Whirling red discs flashed before his eyes, his temples throbbed with agony. He dared not open his mouth, for at dawn that morning he had gathered a handful of cedar twigs and clenching his jaws desperately upon them, discovered that they had kept his tongue moist during the gruelling midmorning heat. Should he open his lips now, with the sun swinging like a molten ball across the meridian, he knew that the hot dry air would rush in, his tongue would swell and protrude from his mouth so that he could not breathe.

Behind him, he heard a long sigh. Looking around he saw the pony's trembling forelegs, with the sweat running down to the cracked dry hooves. Again the knees buckled, and this time the mustang fell.

Do-Atin reached weakly for his rifle. There was only one thing left that he could do now

for the gallant little horse. He fired and the report shattered the breathless silence about him, awakening a thousand echoes. Laying down the smoking rifle, he closed his eyes so as not to behold the death-agony of the expiring pony. When he reopened them again, the horse's legs were still. His last friend was gone.

As he crouched swaying backward and forward against his heels, arms hanging, head bowed on his laboring breast, bright pictures flashed kaleidoscopically through his sun-crazed brain. Corn Blossom's haggard face, with dark eyes abrim with unshed tears, came toward him on shimmering waves of heat, melted into Chahi's stern visage and receded back into nothingness. Against the blazing canyon wall, the cool live oaks of Thorpe campus appeared, rustled their silken leaves and stretched out their branches invitingly, only to change into John Walton's khaki-clad arms. Again he was a child on the sun-baked drill-ground at Chaco, and the Disciplinar was dragging him past the lines of scared-eyed Indian children to his office. "I won't salute the flag!" *Do-Atin* screamed aloud, "I hate it —I hate it!" and thought he felt again the cut of raw-hide quirt.

It was the sting of cactus burning through his shoulder where he had fallen. Laboriously

turning his body, he lay staring up at the sky. A buzzard was circling down in graceful sweeps of motion. It had seen the dead pony lying in the black pool of blood, to which hundreds of insects and flies were swarming. Nauseous distaste for the unclean bird and all these eaters of carrion swept over the Navajo, causing him to struggle to his feet and look around the torrid canyon.

Ahead of him, a mauve and saffron cut in the cliff-side led upward to a vast window-rock above. Perhaps it was a mirage created by refracted light-rays, perhaps it was only a vision of his sun-tortured brain, but the chief's son looked up and saw a woman's figure beckoning to him. The graceful brown hand that waved him upward, seemed heavy with silver and turquoise bracelets, the slim bronze throat encircled by a double strand of fine matched stones of the same cut and hue as those he wore. Bright skirts of voluminous calico swept over the boulders, which, strangely enough, remained visible behind them; a vivid magenta blouse encircled the slender torso. Her face was dim, yet the Navajo had a sudden impression of great wisdom, and a deep and tender calmness, as if for a moment he had glimpsed the eyes of Kuma, the All-One, behind the face of his ghostly visitant.

"It's my mother," he heard himself saying,

quietly, "She said she'd come to me in my need."

As the chief's son clambered up over the flinty rocks and shale which burned and cut his hands at the touch, the lovely vision moved on ahead. Haggard eyes staring, lips parched and flaking, palms bleeding, the chief's son dragged himself up to the window-rock. With the last vestige of his strength, he raised himself onto the ledge and looked through the tremendous black arch-way.

Below him lay the Forgotten Valley, completely enclosed by the saffron and mauve walls of Canyon du Chelly. A ribbon of silver sand cut through it with pools of water and patches of emerald green gleaming jewel-like in the shadow of cliffs which protected them from the scorching sun. Here and there rose shafts of twisted lava and pinnacles of sandstone polished by high winds which whooped through the mighty window-ledge on which he stood. Like a shimmering mirage, the lovely little valley lay before the Indian, gorgeous in its coloring, fair and silent, hushed, without sound or motion, from the black hole where he stood to the ruddy canyon wall which shut it in against the cobalt sky.

With an effort that made him strangely sick, *Do-Atin* strove to keep his feet. Before his dizzy vision came rolling a vast wave of velvet blackness, shot by tiny dancing flecks of red.

Like surf on a beach, it pounded over his head, he lurched forward and fell through the window-rock toward the valley below. Like a pigmy doll, his limp figure went rolling down the smooth granite, struck a ledge, bounded into the air, thudded dully and went spinning downward again. The six-hundred foot fall would have killed him, had he not fainted on the ledge above. . . .

The Navajo regained consciousness lying on shale rock under a stunted pinon tree. Conscious of pain shooting through his bruised body, he moved his hand and discovered that it lay wrist-deep in sun-warm water. Like a gust of flame, thirst again gripped him. He struggled up and plunged shoulder-deep into a water-hole near which he had fallen.

When he raised up, the heat-craze was gone. The whirling red discs melted away. The sun, which had been spinning like a copper ball before his throbbing eyes, whirled back up into its proper place in the sky between the canyon walls. With a lucid mind, he looked down curiously at the water-hole, for a pungent smell had assailed his nostrils. At sight of it, he stared.

"Why, it's oil!" he whispered, and raised himself to his knees.

"It's oil—a natural seepage!" he shouted, springing to his feet and flinging his arms above his head.

"God—God!" he screamed, and shook his clenched fists at the blazing sky. "Why do you give me this now, when the white man will take it away, when I can't keep it for myself —for me or mine?"

Around him the silence, rent asunder by his bitter cry, closed in again, thick and deep and smooth as a blanket of mist. Then from afar, from the distant saffron cliff the echoes came bounding softly back:

"White man will take it away—"

Through the shimmering haze of colored light and distance echoed the thin far voices:

"Keep it—for thee and thine!"

At the elfin challenge the Warrior-Spirit seemed to come back to *Do-Atin,* the Tamed One. His agonized fingers still extended skyward, tightened slowly, as an eagle's talons grip and hold its prey. Shaking his balled fists frenziedly at the copper sky, he shrieked his declaration of battle to the white man, his war-cry of Atsa the Eagle who clings to his meat and holds it for his own:

"He sha'n't have it! It's mine—I'm going to keep it for my people!"

Spent by his agony of revolt, Wing Foot dropped on his knees again beside the oil seepage and plunged his arms shoulder deep into its black-rainbow depths.

END OF BOOK III

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I

With one hand Navajo Jim handed a bottle of sarsaparilla pop to a bobbed-haired tourist sitting on the bench outside the Cheelan Trading Post and with the other propped his rickety chair against the wall beside her. Before he could sit down, a pimply young man accompanying the blonde tourist took possession and blew out a great cloud of cigarette smoke. With a dark look the trader sat down on the far end of the bench.

"If anyone should ask me," observed the bobbed-haired tourist, looking up over her straw, "I think Inscription Rock's a total wash-out."

"So you've just come up from Zuni?" Jim replied, conversationally, "I guess the old pueblo's changed considerable since I was there thirty years ago. Where'd you spend the night?"

"—At Tamale Pete's," answered the girl. "Coronado was a fool to come all the way up

Mexico just to discover that mud village!"

Navajo Jim stroked his chin and looked reproachfully at her.

"When he started out, Miss, he thought he was goin' to find more'n he did," he observed. "He got his tip from an old Injun who had scouted for the Padres, only the Injun stretched the truth considerable. Father Marcos—he was the first tourist who happened along past Inscription Rock an' carved his monogram on it—was out huntin' for new souls to save, an' so he didn't care much whether they was in red skins or white. But when he came home to Mexico City an' his guide got to talkin' about the Seven Golden Cities they'd found, Coronado got interested, an' decided to go along next time an' see for himself. With his eyes peeled for turquoise roofs an' golden floors, like he'd been told about, he musta felt plenty tired an' low spirited when he saw Zuni!"

"He didn't have nothing on me last night!" remarked the blonde-haired tourist, gurgling through the straw, "What'd he do then?"

"He thought they was holdin' out on him," continued Jim, "an' so he tortured a few Zunis —strung 'em up by the thumbs he did, tryin' to make 'em tell where they'd hidden the bonanze. That's where the Zunis got the habit they've been indulgin' in lately at Shalaco—"

"What habit?" interrupted the pimply young man, "You'd think they went around hanging people up by their thumbs, from what you just said."

"That's what I said, young feller," remarked Jim, with asperity, "an' that's what I meant."

"Gee, no!" cried the girl, looking up delightedly at the trader. "Come on, pardner, dish up the dirt!"

The trader looked in bewilderment from the piquant face beside him, to the bored young man on the chair.

"She means spill your yarn," explained her husband. "Go on, we got plenty of time an' we might as well listen to you gas here as burn it ourselves out yonder," and he nodded toward the Ford sedan under the cotton-woods.

"Well, if that's the way you feel about it," said Jim with dignity, "I'll be goin' inside."

"Don't be a grouch, Ole Timer!" cried the girl, grabbing his boot. "Come on, out with the story!"

"I'm expectin' company right soon now," grumbled Jim, unmollified.

"What's anybody else doing in this God-awful country?" demanded the youth.

"Lookin' fer oil, I reckon," answered the trader, "This yere desert is lousy with it, y'know."

"No, I didn't!" snapped the thin young man, "Where is it?"

"I didn't suspect there was anything you don't know," answered Jim, mildly.

"Oh, stop chewing the rag, will you two?" cried the girl, hunching her knicker-bockered self cosily against the trader. "Come on, Pardner, you was saying that they hung 'em up by the thumbs at Zuni—"

"It happened this-away," began Navajo Jim, smiling, "Ever' year at Zuni, sometime between December third and tenth, they have a bang-up celebration called the Shalaco. Now this here festivity is really sort of a grand tribal house-warmin', if you get what I mean—"

"No, I don't!" remarked the young man on the chair.

"Shut up, Paul!" cried the girl, and turned back to the trader. "Sure, I do, only tell some more."

"Well, whenever there's goin' to be a weddin' in Zuni," continued Navajo Jim, ignoring the interruption, "They build the happy pair a new house, only nobody lives in it till after Shalaco week. If there was nine young couples stepping off, there'd be nine houses waitin' to be consecrated by the Shalacos."

"What're they?"

"The Gods of the Household—priests dressed

up somepin elegant in buckskins an' masks!" exclaimed the trader. "At sundown on Shalaco night, they come out of a kiva—that's a secret lodge room under the ground, y'understand—an' parade single file on stilts to Zuni. It's some sight, I'm tellin' you, with them turquoise-studded robes a-flappin' against the stilts, an' them feathered masks snappin' their eagle-beaks up an' down, an' five hundred religion-mad Zunis yellin' an' follerin' along to escort each Shalaco to its new house!"

"But I thought you said the brides and grooms had the new houses?" said the girl.

"I did—but the Shalacos bless it for 'em first!" beamed the trader. "There's a separate Shalaco for each new house, an' they come hoppin' in an' squat down there for the night, an' feast an' make 'emselves generally sociable. Why, during Shalaco week, visitors pretty near eat the Zunis outa house an' home! They even let the Navajos in, because it's the grand celebration of hospitality, an' if anybody is turned away hungry er dry, the Shalaco might get mad an' refuse to bless the new couple with long life an' prosperity an' a big family, if you get what I mean."

"I do, exactly!" nodded the bobbed-haired tourist, "What happens next?"

"Nothin', except ever'body gets pie-eyed on *toquila,* an' at dawn the Shalacos depart—if

they kin still walk," concluded the trader. "It's sure a sight to see 'em go, too, 'cause what's left of the Pueblo turns out an' throws corn-meal at 'em, an' wishes 'em good luck 'till they come back next year."

"Where do they go?"

"Back into the kiva," answered Navajo Jim. "They ain't really gods, you know, child, they're jus' medicine men dressed up to look important an' impress the other Injuns, so's they kin keep their jobs."

"But what about the thumb-screws?" asked the young man, in a bored tone.

"I'm gettin' to that," remarked Navajo Jim, severely. "One story at a time's my motto. Well, it seems that four or five years ago the Smithsonian Institute down at Washington, D. C. decided it would be a fine thing if they had some motion pitturs of this yere grand occasion, for historical purposes, y'understand. So what'd they do but send two peirt young fellers with motion pittur cameras to Zuni to photograph the Shalaco."

"But I thought you can't take a camera into Zuni!" protested the excited girl. "At least, they wouldn't let us take any snapshots there."

"No, Miss, they wouldn't—an' this here story I'm tellin' you is why!" announced Jim, impressively, "Well, the young men come an'

got hold of an important-lookin' Injun named Zuni Nick, an' asked him if he thought he could make arrangements fer them to take pitturs. Sure he could, sez he, fer a consideration! So they paid the consideration, an' then he took 'em to see the *Cacique.*"

"What kind of a place is that?" asked the young man.

"It's a him—Chief Priest," explained Jim, shortly, and resumed his narrative: "When they got the *Cacique's* attention, Nick said in Zuni that the two nice young men didn't want to take no pitturs, but was only attendin' Shalaco as honored guests, and could they stay? 'Sure' nods the *Cacique.* An' then that low-lived Injun turns to the nice young men, an' says: 'Yes, the *Cacique* jus' nodded that it would be all right, only don't set up yer cameras till the Shalacos get into the village.' Now can you beat that fer as pretty an example of dirty double-crossin' as ever you heard tell of?" he concluded, dramatically.

"But why did they have to get permission in the first place?" asked the girl, wrinkling her dainty nose in bewilderment. "I don't understand—"

"Lord, child, you evidently don't know nothin' about Injuns," cried Navajo Jim, emphatically— "—if you don't understand their camera complex."

"Camera complex?" echoed the young man from the chair.

"Sure, camera taboo, if y'understand that word any better," explained the trader, condescendingly. "You see the Pueblo Injuns—an' Zunis is o' course that kind, 'cause they live in villages—the Pueblos believe that when they die, they'll go live with the Rain Gods on the San Francisco Peaks. That's why the relatives always kill the favorite pony of the deceased at the grave, so's he'll have a horse to ride. Now, when anybody wants to take a live Injun's picture, the Redskin argues this a-way: 'If you put me in that devil-box, how will I go live on the San Francisco Peaks when I die? I'll be in that box.'

" 'No, you won't,' you answers, 'That's just a pittur of you!' to which the Injun answers: 'Well, yuh don't want me then!' an' so sayin' he turns an' walks into his pueblo and shuts the door, 'cause he ain't goin' to have you snappin' him in unawares!

"O' course," continued the trader, "If you want his pittur real bad, he might consent tuh sell you the part of himself what goes into the box, an' so he does. But with Shalacos, it would be an awful insult if part of them got shut up in a camera for life when they was visitin' the Zunis peaceable-like. They'd all

get sore an' stay away, an' wouldn't bless the pueblo with peace an' plenty—"

"And triplets!" nodded the girl, "Go on, what happened to the two young men?"

"They set up their cameras an' started grindin'," continued Navajo Jim, "an' all of a sudden five hundred mad Zunis mobbed 'em! They stamped up an' down on their fine instruments until they weren't nothin' but a heap o' scrap iron. They'd have wrecked the two young men, too, if the Injun Agent hadn't run up an' put both his arms about their shoulders. No Injun's goin' to lay hands on their Agent nowadays—after what the U. S. Cavalry done here in the Eighties," he concluded, with an emphatic wag of his head.

"What'd they do to Zuni Nick?" asked the young man.

"Strung him up by the thumbs, o' course!" announced the trader, enjoying his climax. "Pretty soon the Agent comes gallopin' down from the school in his Ford, an' tries to save the sufferin' Injun. 'No,' sez the *Cacique,* 'This ain't a matter for the secular arm,' meaning Uncle Sam, an' the Agent couldn't do nothin' except get into his Ford an' gallop off again. Bein' a right smart man an' acquainted with Injuns, he done just that, only he went to Gallup instead of goin' back to the school."

"What for—the police?" asked the girl.

"Lord, child, there weren't no police in Gallup!" answered Navajo Jim, "Why, that town was a hell-hole, till the Santa Fe come in an' started railroad first-aid an' Sunday School classes fer engineers. Nope, there sure weren't no police then, but when the Agent busted into the principal saloon an' told the cowboys, it was duck-soup to them! Off they rides hell-fer-leather to Zuni, an' shoots the town up—and Nick down!"

"Was he dead?" asked the young man.

"Not quite," responded the trader, "The Agent shoved his lungs an' liver back inside his ribs, an' slingin' him over the back of the Ford, galloped off to the Government Hospital with him, where he recovered fine."

"I'll bet he never went back to Zuni," cried the girl, and wagged her mop of yellow hair.

"Sure he did!" remarked Navajo Jim, peering off down the trail. "The very next year he tried to pull the same stunt, only this time it was with a lady motion pittur director from Hollywood—"

"No!" cried the young man, tossing away the stub of his cigarette, "Tell us about that."

"There ain't nothin' much to tell," answered Jim, and yawned. "This here lady an' her outfit was making scenics for one of them big Hollywood studios, an' I was guidin' 'em. We

come into Zuni at eleven o'clock the night before Shalaco, an' them five hundred Zunis was all waitin' up fer us!"

"What'd they do?" asked the girl, her eyes wide with excitement.

"Took our cameras into the kiva, an' sat on 'em all night," answered the trader.

"What happened to you?"

"Nothin'—'ceptin' what the bed-bugs done!" replied the trader, "We was herded into one lil' pueblo, Tamale Pete's dump. It weren't much bigger than this bench, but there was three double beds in it an' a cot. Our outfit was six men an' the director. Bein' a maiden lady, she took the cot," he added, and rose to peer down the trail.

"Come on, finish the story," cried the girl tugging impatiently at the trader's overalls, "What happened next?"

"Nothin', I told you!" answered Navajo Jim. "The director pulled off her boots, an' we hit the hay. The Zunis walked around the Pueblo all night, but we never noticed, 'cause we had been makin' pitturs since dawn an' was dead to the world anyhow. The next morning they told us to git out—an' we got."

"You mean you ran away?"

"Nope, we went in the cars," answered Navajo Jim, waving to an automobile which was crossing the canyon wash.

"I think that director was a quitter!" announced the bobbed-haired tourist, "I'd a stayed and stolen the pictures."

"D'you think you could steal anything from an Injun?" the trader observed. "That lady from Hollywood had seven thousand dollars worth o' cameras to worry about. Personally, I was right relieved when she said, 'Let's go, boys!' We departed in a shower of melon rinds an' came up here to Canyon du Chelly where she got stuck in the quick-sand."

"You're the dam'dest liar I ever heard!" snapped the young man, sliding off the chair, "I believed you up to that last one."

"I don't care whether you believe me or not," answered Navajo Jim, "I'm tellin' the truth, jus' the same," he added, indifferently, and walked away to meet a touring car which was approaching.

The dusty high-powered machine rolled to a stop at the gasoline pump. At the wheel John Walton put on the hand-brake, reached under his suede coat, took out a silver cigarette case and extended it toward his companion. In silence the older man took one. Walton struck his lighter and held the flame to his companion's and his own lips. Age and experience had chiselled the Disciplinar's face into fine clean planes, but the steel blue eyes and tanned skin had remained unchanged dur-

ing the passing years. The lean fingers which held his cigarette, the spare and muscular body faultlessly groomed in hunting jacket, whipcord breeches and riding boots possessed the same indolent strength and grace as when he had drilled little Navajos at sun-baked Chaco. Only his eyes had changed, grown sad, and his hair was prematurely streaked with grey.

His companion was Walton's senior by twenty years. Stretched out on the leather cushions with his legs under the control board, his long body bore a distinction which no amount of desert travel could obliterate. From under shaggy white brows, his eyes regarded the approaching trader with an amused and sardonic twinkle.

"Hello, Jim!" Walton called out cheerfully.

"How dye, yerself!" answered the trader, "You're sure a sight fer sore eyes!"

"Don't tell me you've got trachoma, too!" joked Walton's companion, "John, have I had the pleasure of knowing your friend?"

"This is Navajo Jim Morris, Mr. Commissioner," Walton introduced them, "Jim—Mr. Beale, from Washington."

"The Great White Father!" murmured the trader, pretending to be vastly impressed.

"Nope, only his Headman!" laughed Beale, "How's the oil business?"

"Meanin' fer yerself?" Jim took the hint,

quickly. "I'll fix yer up in two shakes of a lamb's tail, sir."

As he drained the last few drops from the hose, the trader squinted up casually at Walton.

"Whar yuh goin' this trip, John?"

"Oh, just into the Backcountry a little ways," the ex-Disciplinar answered, "Mr. Beale thought he'd like to see the Rattlesnake Well."

"Gawd, but weren't them dudes lucky!" began Jim, volubly, "Here I been prospectin' around here fer nigh onto fifty years, ever since I guided wagon trains tuh Oregon, only I never had the sense tuh look fer black gold! Why, Mr. Commissioner—"

"Sorry, Jim, but we want to make the White House tonight!" interrupted Walton, pleasantly, "Save us that one till we come out."

The trader shot another keen look at Walton before he stepped away from the radiator.

"Sure, I understand!" replied Jim, without rancor, "Proud to 've metcha, Mr. Beale! Goo'-bye, an' good luck!"

"Good-bye!" called the Commissioner, as the car whirled off toward the canyon.

"Say, Pop, who's the swell looker at the wheel?" called out the bobbed-haired tourist.

"Don't bother me, gal!" the trader answered, feeling in the pocket of his overalls, "I got some urgent telephonin' to do pronto!" he added importantly, and hurried into the Post.

Kicking her bottle away, the blonde-tourist looked toward her husband with sudden distaste.

"Gosh, but you're a wash-out!" she observed, without emotion, "Gimme these Lewis Stone types ev'rytime!"

"Say, who ja think you are—Greta Garbo?" snapped the thin young man, "Pull up your sox appeal."

"Aw, shut up!" rejoined the bobbed-haired tourist, and rolled her tan silk stockings up over her knickerbockers again.

CHAPTER II

Lying on the window-ledge with his rifle beside him, Wing Foot heard the throb of Walton's motor from afar. Leaping to his feet, he crouched behind a boulder and looked down into the canyon. Around a shaft of ruddy granite, the automobile crawled up between the towering walls like a minute dusty insect, but echoes magnified the throb of the laboring motor into a pulsing roar like that of an airplane engine. From the spinning rear wheels, wide arcs of sand sprayed out. Below the window, the car jerked to a stop.

His eyes hardening, the chief's son watched two men get out of the front seat and walk around the rear of the automobile. From the height where the Navajo lay, they looked like pigmies crawling about on the hot sand of the stream-bed. Their consultation ended, one climbed into the front seat again, backed the automobile onto harder ground and rejoined his companion. Both men then turned curiously toward the vast black span half way up the canyon wall where Wing Foot lay.

Picking up his rifle, the chief's son climbed noiselessly down the grade toward the approaching men. He was soon close enough to overhear their conversation.

"Notice that shale up there?" an authoritative voice was saying, in tones vaguely familiar to the Indian, "That's not copper deposit, or gold—"

"Black gold, eh?" answered another voice, "Wonder what's on the other side of that window rock up there."

"Let's have a look!" rejoined the first voice.

Wing Foot stepped quickly from around his boulder, and found himself staring into Walton's surprised eyes. Behind the former Disciplinar, a white-haired man had paused to catch his breath from the climb.

"*Yat-tay, Hastin* [man]!" cried Walton, pleasantly,—"Navajo, this is our Headman from Washington—"

"How do you do, Mr. Commissioner?" the chief's son answered, ignoring Walton's outstretched hand and nodding perfunctorily to the Government official.

At the Navajo's reply, Mr. Beale's eyes twinkled at Walton's expense.

"You speak English?" he observed, in a surprised tone.

"Yes, I've been—educated!" answered the chief's son.

At the inflection, the Commissioner shot a keen glance at the Navajo.

"Well, our system must be something of a success!" he continued, sitting down on a boulder and regarding the handsome Navajo with evident satisfaction, "It seems to have done pretty well by you!"

"Has it?" Wing Foot replied harshly, and controlled himself with an effort. The sight of Walton had infuriated him. Since he had reached manhood, the chief's son had been looking forward to the day when he could settle his score with the former Disciplinar of Chaco School. Now that Fate had brought the two white men into his lonely canyon, the Navajo's hand gripped his rifle—and then relaxed. His quarrel was with Walton, not the Commissioner.

"You don't sound entirely convinced!" Mr. Beale remarked, quizzically, "What's wrong with the system?"

"It's impractical and worse than useless!" answered Wing Foot, shortly, "It fits us for work in the white man's world where we aren't wanted, and unfits us for life on the Reservation."

"That's a broad statement, but well put," admitted the Government official, with a sidelong glance of admiration at the Navajo, "What would you suggest?"

"Leave us alone!"

"We can't do that," Walton took up the argument, "Uncle Sam requires that all the Indian children go to school when they're six years old," he continued, looking squarely at the hostile-eyed Indian. "The Hopis have day-schools near their mesa, and the Zunis have theirs in their Pueblo. It's more difficult with you Navajos. You're always on the move in search of grass for your sheep, and so the Government has to take the Navajo children from the range and put them into boarding-schools. There are five thousand Navajos wandering over thirteen million square acres in Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada. How's the Government to establish moving schools all over three states? Since the schools can't come to the Navajo children, what else is there to do but make them come to the schools?"

"Let them live their own lives on their own land, in their own way, as they did before the white man came," retorted the Indian.

"As a theory, that sounds fine!" answered the Commissioner, his eyes twinkling again, "But as an actual fact, it doesn't work out. The white man is here now and here to stay. So is the Navajo, because the birth rate is increasing ten percent every five years. Since Indian and white man are thus compelled to live together, the Indian must know how to

speak English, so he can protect himself, for I've noticed that whenever a white man starts having any business dealings with an Indian, he seems to turn dishonest on general principles. Language is the common ground of equality, so what can the Government do except make the Navajo children go to school? Isn't it true," he went on, looking up with his frank and charming smile, "that the Navajos are one of the richest tribes in the world, in property? Each man owns an average of one hundred sheep, four cows or steers and six horses."

"Aye, the old men are rich enough," answered Wing Foot shortly, "It's the younger ones, like myself—" He paused, and his eyes grew dark, "We're nothing! We're neither good Indian nor white man!"

"At least you know English!" broke in the Commissioner, "You know how to sell your flocks, how to protect yourself and your property! Why, it seems to me you have it pretty soft! You get free education, free medical treatment, free land, free advice in farming and sheep-raising,—all without a cent of taxes! It strikes me that white man has treated you pretty well!"

"Pretty well!" repeated the Navajo. "You come in here with your railroads and your guns, your fine cars and better ways of living!" He looked resentfully at the other's

well-tailored clothes. "You've made us young Indians to see things about ourselves that we would never have noticed if you hadn't dragged us off to school!" He paused and let his veiled eyes rest momentarily on Walton's face, "And what good have you done? You've taught us to know more than our parents, so that they resent our knowledge and are antagonistic toward us. You've broken their pride and turned us away from our own people and our old ways of living, without giving us anything practical to replace them. And now you say that we should forget our traditions and our gods and live as the white man lives—"

"How else can you live in these canyons and stay *alive?*" Walton interrupted, "What else can you do except raise sheep and sell blankets and silverware?"

"We stayed alive," the Navajo answered, hotly, "for a thousand years before the white man came, and we never saw a sheep! We had the buffalo—"

"Yes, but the buffalo are gone," interposed the Commissioner.

"Who killed them?" retorted Wing Foot, "The white man! He shot them down in thousands for their hides and took our lands, driving us into these canyons—"

"Haven't the Navajos always preferred this desert?" asked the Commissioner. "I thought

the Navajos and the Pueblo Indians were given Reservations where they had always lived. Isn't that true?"

"Yes—and no," answered Wing Foot, "We have our land, but not our meat. I tell you, the herds are gone—and the white man killed them."

"No, not the white man entirely," replied Walton with quiet authority, "I should say that the white man's houses and farms and cities killed the buffalo, for what was once their grazing ground, is now Kansas and Iowa and Nebraska and the Dakotas."

"But it's the white man just the same!" cried the infuriated Navajo, "What right did he have to come at all?"

"He couldn't help himself," answered the Commissioner, rising so that he stood eye to eye with the trembling Indian. "Can't you see that he was caught and swept in on the westward movement of the White Race—"

"Commissioner, look there!"

The excited cry came from Walton who had whirled and was pointing down the canyon.

"Look at that landslide!"

Wing Foot and the Commissioner turned. Down the canyon came a rumbling sound. Below and on the opposite wall, a great mass of earth and rock, undercut ages ago by the stream and eroded by frost and rain, had been

balancing for centuries on the edge of equilibrium. Now, perhaps because of the vibration of the automobile motor, it was in motion. Down the cliff-side it came crashing.

"Look there, Navajo!" cried the Commissioner, "The coming of the white man is like that landslide. The westward march of Empire carried him into the Indians' Country and he could no more stop himself than the rocks in that landslide can stop."

The three men watched the great mass of rock and debris as it came thundering down.

"Navajo, see that little tree over there?" demanded the Commissioner, pointing to a dwarfed pine that grew on a ledge in the path of the approaching avalanche. "That pine tree is like the Indian, caught before the westward sweep of civilization."

Wing Foot looked at the small dark pine. With a roar and a vast cloud of dust, the landslide swept over it, bent it to the top. On and on crashed the avalanche down into the streambed below. As it struck, a great column of alkali dust rose and seemed to hang motionless on the hot July air. The three men watched for a moment, then turned back to each other.

"Navajo!"

At the authoritative ring in the Commissioner's voice, the Indian looked up resentfully.

"I want you to understand me," began the white man. "Right now it's more important that you understand me than anything else that may happen in your life, because if you understand me now, you'll understand the Government—and the Government policy toward the Indian. Look at what's left of that pine tree over there!"

The chief's son turned his veiled eyes toward the canyon wall.

"Soon that pine tree," continued the older man, "will push its head up through the gravel and sand which covers it. Soon it will root itself firmer than ever in the new rich earth which the landslide has brought down. Soon it will send out straighter branches than it did before and will grow into a stronger tree."

The Commissioner paused and put his hand on Wing Foot's shoulder.

"So it would be with the Indian," he went on, "If only you would stop fighting the Government and would let us help you get rooted in the new soil and changed conditions where Civilization or Fate or whatever you want to call it, has placed you. However, you've brought forward some pretty strong arguments for your side of the case," he added, thoughtfully, "You are quite an unusual young fellow to find buried up here in this canyon. By the way, where did you go to school?"

"Chaco," answered Wing Foot distinctly, his own eyes on Walton's face.

"Now I remember you!" cried the ex-Disciplinar, "Tell me, what was your name?"

The chief's son whirled toward Walton, his hand gripping the rifle until the knuckles gleamed white, his eyes blazing from his strained and haggard face.

"You ought to know—you named me!" he cried, "Have you forgotten *Do-Atin,* the Tamed One?"

"Wing Foot!" cried Walton, his face changing, "I'm sorry—"

"Oh, don't be sorry for me!" answered the Navajo, thickly. "You only singled me out for a little more ridicule than the rest of us Redskins. Individually and collectively, we're all *Do-Atins!* Every look, every glance we get from you Whites spells just one thing—*Do-Atin!*"

"That's gratitude for you!" the Commissioner burst out, impatiently.

With an odd look in his eyes, Walton turned toward his companion.

"If you don't mind, I'd like to speak to this man alone," he suggested, courteously.

Mr. Beale glanced from Walton to the Navajo.

"All right, if you think it's safe," he commented with reluctance.

"It's quite safe."

Disciplinar and Indian watched in silence as the Government official walked back toward the automobile. Walton stood waiting.

"You whipped me once," Wing Foot began, in a low tone, "I wonder if you realize just what that whipping meant to me?"

At the Navajo's words, Walton's face went pale. Then Judy had been right after all,—the shameful name had hounded the chief's son through life, cutting into his very soul, making him hate every Indian and every white man who used it! Honest with himself, Walton squared his shoulders to hear the rest of the Indian's accusation.

"You gave me that name!" Wing Foot continued, "I was the only one of those poor scared little devils who had guts enough to stand up to you. You gave me that name—I've never been able to live it down! Live it down? God, it's made me what I am!" he laughed harshly, "And what *am* I? Neither Redman nor white man—just *Redskin!*"

Walton knew that he ought to answer, but his tongue refused. He was not thinking as much of the infuriated Navajo now before him, as of a slim, blue-eyed girl who stood quivering with righteous sympathy for a small, drooping child, whose hand had come up at last in terri-

fied salute. With an effort, he forced himself to meet the Navajo's eyes.

"I'm sorry," he said, simply, "I thought it was my duty."

At Walton's words, the black rage which had been rising in the Navajo's heart, burst physical restraint. Flinging aside his rifle, so that it fell clattering to the rocks, he stepped forward.

"I wonder if you're man enough to whip me now?" the chief's son began insolently, and struck Walton across the cheek with his open palm. "Maybe now you can give me another name! I'll fight you anyway you want—as Redman or white!"

Walton squared back his shoulders. His face was pale except where the Navajo had struck him, his eyes steady and unafraid.

"I can't fight you, Wing Foot," he answered, clearly, "All I can say is that I'm sorry."

His foot on the running board of the automobile, the Commissioner looked up apprehensively toward the two men on the rocks above.

"Come on, Walton!" he shouted, "We'll have to go—if I make the train."

"Hurry up, Walton!" he shouted, "We'll miss that wedding at Acoma."

Wing Foot started and shot a quick glance

toward the car in the canyon below. Walton hardly noticed his companion's shout. He was looking regretfully at the chief's son.

"I don't suppose you'll shake hands," he said, at length, "I wouldn't, if I were in your place."

Without further words, the white man turned and walked slowly down the grade toward the waiting machine.

CHAPTER III

It was midafternoon when Walton swung the big automobile toward the sand-dune below Acoma and edged it into line among the many cars parked in the shadow of the mesa wall.

Acoma was in carnival mood. Along the sunny streets hurried visiting Navajos, Zunis, Apaches from southwestern Arizona, artists from the colony at Taos and tourists. From a hidden plaza came the throbbing of drums, their rhythmic pulse accompanied by a single flute melody which rose and fell in plaintive cadence on the pinon-smoky air. The Commissioner followed Walton down the street and through a narrow passage. At the entrance, in the central plaza of the village, he paused and looked about him curiously.

In the open court, a marriage feast had been spread. Yucca baskets of golden bread and red-brown bowls filled with fruit and melons, formed circles of lavish plenty. Three sheep sputtered appetizingly on spits, and *piki*, the paper-bread made of dark blue Pueblo corn-batter, curled into parchment-thin scrolls on

hot flat stoves. Dressed in ancient finery, the Acoma Indians ate, drank and joked with Earth Tongue Jim, their host.

At the left of the first circle, the Governor and Council sat on soap boxes before his house. Some distance away, a group of artists from Santa Fe, and twenty or more tourists stood watching the vivid scene before them. Walton guided the Commissioner toward the Council.

"Hello, Governor!" Walton greeted the big Pueblo Indian. "I've brought Commissioner Beale, from Washington, to wish your daughter health and happiness."

Rising, the Governor extended his hand.

"How do!" he answered politely, in English, "Acoma proud—Acoma make big dance for chief's son tonight!" and turning he indicated that the Government official was to be seated on his soap box.

"Thanks, but we'll go speak to our friends!" Walton replied pleasantly, in the Acoma dialect.

Beale glanced at his companion. After a few brief sentences following their departure from the Canyon du Chelly, Walton had driven over to the Pueblo in silence, and Beale had respected his mood. Now, however, it was plain to be seen that the ex-Disciplinar had no idea of allowing his personal feelings to inter-

fere with official business or courtesy. Scanning the rows of visitors, Walton took the Commissioner's arm and piloted him toward the Santa Fe group.

"Hello, Handsome!" called out a big unshaven giant, with a red-blonde beard, clad in khaki shirt and dusty riding breeches. "Haven't seen you, John, since you stopped licking little Injuns and dipped your fingers in oil."

"Howdy, Tom!" laughed Walton, shaking hands cordially. "Commissioner, this is Tom Gillespie, the artist who really discovered Taos."

"Delighted!" answered Beale, and took the big hand outstretched toward him. "I saw your *Cochiti Eagle Dancer* at the Corcoran Gallery—congratulations."

Grinning with embarrassed pleasure, the artist looked around, and noticed the expectant semicircle which his friends were forming about them.

"That's right, gather around!" he cried, jovially, "This is the Great White Father, children, Commissioner Beale of the Indian Service at Washington. This is Betty LaMare, our young poetess, sir," he continued, as a tall girl with straight black hair shingled low above grey eyes, stepped forward, "—and Bob Latimer, who's writing his next play about our

Flagellantes—and Winthrop Banning, who needs no introduction on this or the other side of the water."

One by one, the members of the Taos colony stepped forward and shook hands with Beale. Like one big and jolly family, they all had a welcome for the Government official, and a joke for Walton. The Commissioner met their cordiality with his own, for he had heard much of this group, each an acknowledged leader in his field, who had settled below the snowy shoulders of the Sangre de Christo Range and had made the beautiful old Pueblo of Taos an Athens of the West.

"This isn't much of a she-bang, compared to the Hopi Snake-Dance!" observed Gillespie.

"Oh, do tell us about it!" urged one of the tourists, a plump middle-aged woman from Iowa, "It must be perfectly terrible!"

An amused look flashed quickly around the Taos group. The Snake-Dance was perennially under fire at Washington, and Gillespie had brought up the subject intentionally. Everyone exchanged amused glances as Latimer spoke:

"You tell her, John."

"The fundamental idea is a house-party for rattle-snakes," Walton began, pleasantly, "You understand how the Hopis believe that rattle-snakes are the messengers or couriers

of the Rain Gods who lived on the San Francisco Peaks. This is quite natural," he went on, "when you stop to consider how snakes do seem to make a habit of coming out of their holes just before a shower."

Pausing a moment to light a cigarette, Walton continued:

"Like all primitives, the Hopis believe they are dependent on the generosity of the Rain Gods for their crops, and of course they really are," he added, "because the snow on the San Francisco Peaks precipitates the summer rains in this part of the country. See how the Indian gets right down to the bed-rock of natural phenomena for his nature-worship? Every summer before the corn pollenates, they pull off this sacred house-party for rattlers—"

"Why rattle-snakes?" interposed the lady from Iowa. "Because they're the most deadly?"

"I don't think so," answered Walton, "—probably because they are the most plentiful in this part of the desert. Anyway, the Snake Priests go out and catch about fifty of the brutes. If the rattler is uncoiled, they sneak up on him with a feather whip to distract his attention, and chuck him in a bag before he knows what's happening. If he sees them coming and coils to strike, they blow to-

bacco smoke in his eyes until he relaxes. Then they take them back to the Pueblo, which comes out to meet them, and escorts them to the kivas. The snakes are put into yucca baskets there and entertained for nine days. Each afternoon the priests bring them up into the plaza at Walpi, and dance with them—''

''Their daily dozen!'' murmured the grey-eyed poetess.

''But don't the snakes bites the priests?'' demanded another tourist.

''Quite often,'' answered Walton, ''When that happens, he goes down into the kiva to get another drink of the anti-toxin they've got below. These priests have been drinking the stuff for the last three weeks, until their entire bodies are saturated with it. They don't eat or drink anything else and it seems to render them immune to a rattler's poison.''

''What is it?''

''I never felt like trying the stuff,'' confessed Walton, with a slight grimace, ''And they won't let you take any of it away with you, not even on your cuff, for fear you'll analyze it. It smells like a combination of tobacco, cactus and loco weed, and it must have an awful kick. It's only for emergencies, though. The old priests rarely have to use it.''

''How do you mean?'' Beale asked.

''They seem to hypnotize the snake with

their eye," Walton went on, "They believe that a snake will strike only when you look away from him."

"What happens next?"

"On the ninth day they have a whoopee dance," Gillespie answered, "The snakes are so tired by then that the priests take all kinds of liberties with them. Everybody eats himself sick, and at dawn the priests, escorted by those who can still walk, take the snakes back to the desert again. There they are turned loose with appropriate rituals. The idea is that they will run home to the Rain Gods and tell what a nice time they had at the Hopi house-party, and of course the Rain Gods—"

"—will reciprocate with abundant showers!" concluded Walton, and turned to look curiously down the street.

"Who are you looking for?" asked Beale, noticing Walton's abstraction, "Where's the chap who's driving me to the train?"

The Commissioner looked down the street. Holliday, the Superintendent of the Southern Pueblos Agency, was approaching with a tall girl. She was bare-headed, and the brisk desert winds had pulled out pale gold curls from her long-bobbed head and were tossing them against her sun-tanned cheeks. Blue eyes flecked with amber lights, noticed the Commissioner, a nose that might have been impudent

if it were not for the characterful and firmly curved red lips below it, a determined little chin, russet-brown sport clothes, brown brogans with fringed leather tongues on a slender instep. Walton stepped forward and shook hands with Holliday.

"Since no one will introduce us, how do you do, sir?" remarked the girl as she met Beale's eyes, "I'm of the Service too, Mr. Beale—Judith Anne Mosely-Williams, of the Mesa School."

"Your fame travels before you, Lady-With-Four-Names!" answered the Commissioner, "John's been telling me about you."

Judy glanced swiftly toward the former Disciplinar.

"How do you do, Mr. Walton?" she said. "Tom, help me up onto this wall, won't you, please?"

"Where'd I get the idea you and Walton were old friends?" Mr. Beale asked Judy, as she perched above him, "John's been telling us about the Snake-Dance, but he won't commit himself pro or con."

"Of course it's the religious phase of the thing that has stirred up all the racket," remarked Latimer, the play-wright, "Your modern Indian, educated or uneducated, is a nature-worshipper just as his ancestors were before him. His religion is an integral and

very important part of his daily life. He expresses his devout respect and awe for the Nature which surrounds him and which he worships, by his everyday acts and in his music, his art, and handicrafts. See that design on that bowl jar over there, sir?" he asked, pointing to an Acoma woman who came swinging across the plaza with a water jar on her head, "These little pyramids are cloud symbols, unspoken prayers of the pottery-maker that the Rain Gods will send showers so that her corn will grow. Look at Mrs. Banning's jacket here." He paused to indicate the bizarrely marked coat of the woman beside him: "Some lonely Navajo woman wove into this blanket her longing for the thunderbolt and the lightning, so that the sun-baked Backcountry might grow green for her husband's sheep and there be peace and plenty in her hogan during our long Arizona winters. The Snake-Dance is much the same thing."

"You put that very well," Beale observed, "What's your opinion, Mr. Gillespie?"

"Oh, I'm a Britisher, you know, so what I'm going to say will probably make you all mad," began the blonde-bearded giant, amiably. "All this criticism and re-hashing of the Indian problem makes me tired. You'd think this was something new or different from the spectacle we see every day in our Colonies of any strong

race swallowing a weaker and antagonistic one. Of course, you Americans have treated the Indians like dirt—remember, I apologized before I started!" he interrupted himself, turning toward Beale. "You've taken their land, you've given them all the vices and filthy diseases of civilization, you've huddled them off on sun-baked reservations, in a state of semi-barbaric isolation, and the great American public says 'Oh, the poor Indian!' taking out in maudlin sympathy the energy which ought to be directed into constructive criticism, public support and the Congressional appropriations which would enable them to run the Indian Service with efficiency, to hire good teachers, to employ adequate council on these land and water bills—"

"Thank you, sir!" murmured Beale, his eyes twinkling, "'A Daniel come to Judgment.'"

"I wish Mr. and Mrs. American Public could see what I've seen," continued Gillespie, "—could come along with John on one of those three-thousand-mile scouting trips of his, winter and summer, over this howling desert, could see the hundreds of Indian Service school-marms like the Lady-With-Four-Names here, sticking it out in this wilderness, on wages a typist or factory girl would consider pin-money, shivering in the winter, burned to a

crisp in the spring and fall, fighting this devilish monotony of sage and sand until I think it would drive them mad! What's the use of my talking like this?" he broke off, "You all know the situation better than I do, and anyhow, let's let Miss William speak for herself."

"I'd hate to see the Indian lose his oneness with Nature," Judy said, avoiding Walton's eye, "The Navajo and the Hopi seem to be so much closer to primitive instincts and emotions than we whites can ever be. To him, Kuma or God is the All-One who dwells everywhere, in fire, air, earth, and water, in plants and animals and trees as well as in himself. Don't you see how this belief has given to the pure-bred and higher type of Indian a dignity and self-respect, a strength of mind and soul, a racial integrity as strong and serene as the Backcountry itself? I should hate to see them lose this, especially the Navajos," she concluded, thoughtfully, "for when they do, they as a Tribe are doomed. But let's don't be so serious," she added, embarrassed, "Here comes the Bride!"

Around the corner from the old Church came a colorful procession, led by the Governor and Corn Blossom. Two by two and pacing slowly to the beat of drums and whistle of reed instruments, the kinsfolk followed waving branches of blooming heather. The bride's eyes were

downcast, her slender body drooping under the weight of the fine old marriage robe of white, red and black, which she wore. A Mexican shawl of blue print covered her glossy dark hair. Without looking up, she and her father led the procession of merrymakers past the group of silent spectators, and on into the Governor's house.

"Poor bride, she's marrying a man she doesn't love!" Judy sighed, watching Corn Blossom disappear through the doorway.

"Why does she do it then?" asked Beale, directly, "She's free, white and twenty-one, and better educated to take care of herself than many American girls."

"She loves a Navajo," Judy answered, "You remember the old inter-tribal feud of Navajo and Pueblo? That seems to have parted them."

"How do you mean?"

"When Corn Blossom first came back to Acoma, they say she was awfully high-spirited and plucky," Judy went on, "Once she came down with my Indian cook to see me and we talked for hours about old times at Chaco, where she first met her Navajo. She knew I had always liked him, you see, but she only came once. I went up to see what had happened to her, but found the usual thing."

"What's that?" demanded Beale.

"She'd reverted to type," answered the teacher, "Modern clothes gone—ashamed or afraid to speak to me in English—broken-spirited!"

"I don't know what we're going to do with these young Indians!" Beale broke out, impatiently, "It cost Uncle Sam nearly $3000.00 to educate that girl over a period of ten years, and she's lost it all in less than eight months!"

"What happened to the Navajo?" asked the Commissioner.

"He went native, too—threw up his scholarship at Thorpe, and went back to a blanket and the Canyon du Chelly!" the teacher answered, bitterly. "You probably have heard of him, he established a track record at Thorpe, but had a run-in with some snobbish students and came home."

"How do you know so much about him?" asked Beale, with a quizzical smile.

"I made it my business to find out," answered Judy, seriously. "An unfortunate thing happened to him at Chaco, and I wanted to know how it affected his life. When he got back to Cheelan, he must have found the same conditions that Corn Blossom did here at Acoma, only he seems to have fought against their laziness, superstitions and disease. Of course, the older men of the Tribe, the uneducated, conservative element, wouldn't stand for

that and so his father turned him out. In the meantime, Corn Blossom's family gave her to Jim and I wrote the Navajo to come down and help her. They tried to run away, but were caught and mobbed. The Navajo barely escaped with his life and as there wasn't any other place he could go, went back to the desert. The principal point I'm making, however," she concluded, "is that I don't see what else he could have done except go back to the desert. Evidently our world didn't want him, yet our ideas have unfitted him for his own life. He seems to have been caught and crushed between the changing generations."

"What's his name?" Beale asked, thoughtfully.

"Wing Foot—*Do-Atin,* the Navajos call him," answered Judy.

The Commissioner looked up sharply.

"That must be the same man Walton apologized to in the canyon this morning!" he exclaimed.

"I—I beg your pardon?" faltered Judy, "You mean John took the trouble to hunt Wing Foot up?"

"I couldn't say that," answered the Commissioner, "Walton was showing me how he conducts his surveys to protect the Navajo oil rights and we noticed some shale in Canyon du Chelly. We were going up to investigate

it, when this Navajo stopped us with a gun and acted pretty ugly!"

"How do you mean?"

"There was bad blood between them from some early disagreement they'd had," continued Beale, "They wanted to talk it out alone and asked me to go back to the car."

"Talk it out?" repeated the teacher, tossing up her head with a flash of her old spirit, "Some things can't be talked out!"

"That's what Walton said, on the way over here," answered Beale, looking curiously at her. "The Indian wanted to fight, but Walton refused. He told me he'd already done the Navajo enough harm as it was. The Navajo looked pretty much down, so I believe John could have whipped him, if he'd wanted to."

Judy looked away to hide the rush of happiness which she knew was transfusing her face. When she swung back to him, Beale was startled by her change of expression. The wistful sadness had faded from her eyes and in its place was a luminous tenderness which the Commissioner had not seen there before.

"I can't thank you enough for what you've told me!" she said earnestly, "I might never have known."

Gillespie and his friends had tired of watching the feasters and were moving off down the street in search of further excitement. Leav-

ing them, Walton and Holliday were approaching.

"We'll have to go, too," the Agent suggested, "It'll be another hour before the corn meal ceremony."

"May I help you?" asked Beale, turning toward the girl on the wall.

Judy looked down at Walton's suede shoulder. As soon as Beale left, she knew that John would excuse himself and leave her. Hesitating a moment, for it was difficult to conquer the stubborn pride which had separated them for years, she placed her hand timidly on Walton's shoulder.

"Thank you, but John will," she answered. "He and I have some things to talk over."

At her words, Walton looked up. Surprise flashed across his face, then dawning joy. For the first time since their estrangement ten years ago, their eyes met in complete understanding.

After the Commissioner and Holliday had gone, Walton stretched up his arms and Judy slipped down into them.

"Judy, you've forgiven me?" he whispered. "What can I do to make you marry me before you change your mind?"

Marry me!" she laughed tremulously, and their lips met.

They drew back into the shadow of the wall,

forgetful of everything except that at last they had refound each other. Judy was the first to notice the voices on the other side of the 'dobi partition, and she remembered the sad little Indian bride. In some unexplainable way, the thought occurred to her that perhaps hers and John's happiness was still bound up with that of the two Indian lovers whose romance had started at Chaco, where theirs had almost ended. Gazing pleadingly at Walton, she whispered:

"John, dear, isn't there anything we can do to help Corn Blossom?"

Walton's face grew serious. The memory of Wing Foot's eyes had been in his thoughts ever since leaving the canyon.

"Lord knows I'd like to!" he said, thoughtfully, "But how could we, Judy?"

"I guess you're right," answered the teacher, "If we helped her run away, it might make trouble for the Government—"

A woman's shriek within the Governor's house interrupted her. The door burst suddenly open and the fat mother burst out. Still shrieking frantically in the Acoma dialect, she ran down the street to the feasters in the plaza. Judy looked swiftly toward Walton.

"Corn Blossom's poisoned herself!" he translated, "Come along—"

At his heels, Judy ran into the Pueblo. With

the Indians' characteristic fear of Death, the girl's family had fled the room. Corn Blossom lay on the floor. Stooping over her, Walton raised her limp hand which still gripped a small black bottle.

"Cyanide," he said, looking up at Judy's white face, "Poor kid, she took a hard way out, I'll say!"

Winking back her tears, Judy turned toward the door.

"Maybe there's a doctor among the Taos crowd!" she cried, hopefully, "I'll get him."

"Wait for me!" Walton answered, jumping up and following her, "The Indians 'll give you trouble if you try to bring him in here."

As the door slammed behind them, the vivid little body on the hard-packed earthen floor moved. Sitting up, Corn Blossom looked cautiously around. Pueblo and sunny street outside were deserted, though women's shrieks and the shouts of excited men drifted in to her. Leaping up, the girl sprang toward the window in the rear of the house, climbed lithely through it and dropped down into the alley beyond. As footsteps came running, Earth Tongue Jim burst through the outer door with the Council and the white visitors at his heels. At sight of the empty room, they all stopped and stared.

"By God, she tricked us!" Jim swore, stoop-

ing to pick up the poison bottle, "She's gone to that dam' Navajo!"

Hurling the bottle in the corner, Jim turned toward the young War Chief.

"Come along, you men with fast horses!" he shouted, "I'll get that Navajo and bring her back if it's the last thing I ever do!"

As the men rushed out of the little room, Walton caught Judy's arm.

"This looks bad!" he whispered, "You'd better come along to Cheelan with me."

Judy nodded as they stepped into the street. Led by Jim and the War Chief, the Acoma men were running to get their ponies from the corrals by the church. The Taos colony hurried for the Horse Trail and their cars parked below. Walton and Judy followed them down the sheer stone steps to his touring car. Already Earth Tongue Jim, the War Chief and several others had gone racing off across country on a direct line toward the Navajo settlement. Walton's big car took the road and fairly leaped away.

On the front seat beside him, Judy pulled her hat down closer over her eyes and composed herself for the wild ride. Past the vast red shoulders of Enchanted Mesa they whirled and down the ancient valley floor. Walton was giving all his attention to the trail. After half an hour, Judy moved suddenly, looking around

her. The tonneau of the car was empty, and so she laughed.

"What's the matter?" asked Walton.

"I thought some one touched my shoulder!" she answered.

"Corn Blossom's ghost?" joked Walton, swinging the speeding car around Locomotive Rock.

A moment later, Judy started again and cried excitedly:

"John, some one tugged my sleeve!"

Turning his head, Walton laughed at her nervousness. At Judy's insistence, he stopped the car to investigate. Looking around, his eyes widened with astonishment, for a slim bronze hand was stealing forward over the back of the front seat. Gripping it, he gave a tug and Corn Blossom's face appeared from the tonneau.

"What on earth are you doing here?" Walton demanded, staring at her.

"I hid under your blankets—I had to get away somehow!" faltered the Indian girl. "Please take me to Cheelan."

"That's the spirit!" cried Judy, and slipped her arm around the girl's shoulders, "You don't have to marry Jim if you don't want to —you're free, white and twenty-one!"

"—and a citizen of the United States!"

added Corn Blossom, with a flash of her old independence.

Walton chuckled in spite of himself.

"I wish you'd thought of that sooner!" he remarked, ruefully, "—before you started another inter-tribal war. Jim and the War Chief are on their way over to shoot up Cheelan."

Corn Blossom's face sobered instantly.

"Is Wing Foot there?" she demanded. "Can Jim find him?"

"Wing Foot's in Canyon du Chelly," Walton interrupted, "Jim can't hurt him, but there's no telling what he may do at the Post." He regarded Corn Blossom thoughtfully for a moment. "The best thing would probably be to take you back to Acoma, and then go pacify Earth Tongue Jim."

At mention of the Pueblo, Corn Blossom's face changed. Gazing steadily at the white man, she interrupted:

"If you take me back, I'll poison myself. I might as well—Jim would kill me now."

"Yes, John, I think he would—slowly!" Judy answered, "You can't take her back to that."

Walton looked at the Indian girl. Her flower-like face had grown sad, her bright eyes had lost their happy light and were dull again with hopelessness. The white man knew that

she was looking down the dreary days that stretched ahead of her to the hard life of the Pueblo woman, to a loveless union with a man her inferior in every way except brute strength, to years of manual toil, of ceaseless child-bearing, of utter mental stagnation, until body and soul gave up the uneven struggle, grew unfeeling and senseless and slowly reverted back to the type which for centuries had people the primitive old sky city, isolated and aloof on its sun-baked island of rock.

"I guess you're right," he said, slowly, "I can't take you back to that. We'll go on to Cheelan, and see what happens."

CHAPTER IV

After Walton's car had whirled downstream out of sight between the canyon walls, Wing Foot dropped wearily onto the boulder against which he had flung his rifle. He wanted to collect his thoughts. His mind was reeling with anger at Walton's refusal to fight, and from fear aroused by the Commissioner's mention of the wedding at Acoma. Only too well he knew whose wedding it must be.

Since he had found the oil seepage the day before, he had been unwilling to leave it. Torn between his love for Corn Blossom and his resolution to hold the new-found wealth for his Tribe, he had spent a sleepless night staring into the fire he had kindled near the oil-seepage and over which he had roasted a rabbit shot with his last cartridge. Dropping his head into his hands, he took up the question again.

Cheelan needed pitiably what that black gold glistening down the rocks in the Forgotten Valley would bring them. If he went back to them with news of his discovery, they might receive him again as soon as they realized what

the oil really meant in terms of the white man's wealth. A picture of Corn Blossom, with great dark eyes filled with unshed tears, rose in his memory. Tonight, she would be given to his old enemy, Jim, whose malicious tongue had branded him at Chaco and had ripped like a knife through the pattern of his life. More than the black gold, than his people's welfare, than even his hatred of the white man, he loved the flower-faced little Pueblo girl.

Rising, the Navajo picked up his rifle and started down toward the canyon floor. With only his winged heels to carry him, there was small hope of his reaching Acoma before nightfall. He knew, however, that he had to try. Once at Cheelan, Navajo Jim would lend him a pony.

Trotting down the white sand, he swung around the Monument and on with the long even stride of the tireless Apache runner. As he came through the draw above the White Palace, echo voices drifted up to him on the hot wind. His senses immediately alert, the Navajo crouched low and dodged nearer, running from boulder to twisted pinon trunk until he came to an open flat below the prehistoric cliff-ruin.

On the pebbly sand stood a dusty touring car. Near by, Navajo Jim bent over a skillet

on which he was cooking flapjacks. Opposite sat two white strangers, one of them a bluff ruddy giant, the other a sharp-eyed dark man. They were eating ham out of tin plates, and its fragrant aroma suddenly reminded the Navajo that he had not had food that day. Under cover of the canyon wall, Wing Foot crept closer until he crouched within earshot.

"You're a hell of a driver, Jim, but you sure can cook!" remarked the red-bearded man, heartily.

"Wait'll you fold yerself around another dozen flapjacks, Mr. Anderson!" the trader smiled up from the fire, "—an' you'll wish you was goin' plumb to Oregon with me yerself!"

"So you did a little scouting in the old days, eh, trader?" Anderson continued, holding out his empty plate.

"I'll say I did, sir!" declared Jim, flipping the pancakes onto it expertly. "Bein' darin' by disposition, I lit out from Kansas in '68, but the tourist business weren't nothin' to speak of till '72. Then it picked up considerable, and I used to make as much as two hundred dollars a round trip guidin' families to Oregon on the way out, an' bringing back buffalo skins to Kansas on the return trip. The work weren't hard, neither—jus' findin' the trail, an' supplyin' fresh meat, an' keepin' the stock together at night, an' the wagons in repair, an'

everybody smilin', an' sociable toward each other."

"Did a round trip take you as long as it does to make a batch of hot cakes?" asked the dark man, sarcastically.

"Oh, cut your kidding, Barret!" Anderson interposed, impatiently, "I like to hear the old geezer talk even if you don't. How long did it take you, trader?"

"Nine months," Jim directed his answer solely to Mr. Anderson, but shoveled pancakes onto Barret's outstretched plate.

"What about Indians?" continued Anderson.

"They was all right, exceptin' Rain-in-the-Face, the big brave who cut out Custer's brother's heart an' et it," Jim continued, pouring out another batch of cakes from the coffee can in which he had mixed them, "Wot bothered me most was keepin' the mule deer an' antelopes straight fer the ladies. Ev'ry mornin' I'd ride around camp, an' ask each missus whether she needed meat or not that day. If she did an' wanted antelope, I put a twig in m' left shirt pocket, but if it were mule-deer she was a-hankerin' fer, I'd put a pebble in my right hip pocket. Then while me an' my three Injun boys—by m' first wife, y' understand, when I was too young 'n inexperienced to know no better—was ridin' along ahead o' the wagon train, we'd shoot as many deer er

antelope as we had twigs an' pebbles. The boys would clean the animules an' tote 'em back to the dif'runt ladies, only the life of a scout is considerable lively, an' sometimes I'd get them twigs an' pebbles mixed, an' then thar'd be hell to pay, 'cause if some missus had said she wanted an' antelope an' I shot her a white tail, you'd a thot I plumb insulted her, an' her menfolks was likely to turn out as good a shot as I was!"

"Now don't try to kid me, trader," spoke up Anderson, "into thinkin' you'd have a fight for such a small thing as that!"

"Tweren't so small, stranger," remarked the old man, thoughtfully, "That thar carcass was all the ladies had to think about, 'ceptin' births an' deaths, an' they shure did take thar meat serious. Them little twigs an' pebbles worried me a heap sight more'n Indians, an' even births, as I recollect."

"Why births?" inquired Barret, and tossed his tin plate and cup across the fire.

" 'Cause we had to stop the whole dam' train," answered Jim, guardedly. "The unfortunate lady couldn't travel comfortable-like an' the rest of the folks would be rearin' to go on, teetotally fergettin' that they had to be brung into the world once 'emselves! Seems to me like I had more trouble keepin' 'em bunched while some pore missus was havin' a

bornin', than fightin' all the Injuns west of the Missouri!"

"Don't sound reasonable to me!" Barret announced bruskly, and turned toward his companion, "Say, d'you suppose Walton's still up here?"

"Can't yuh see them tire tracks leadin' out?" Jim asked, scornfully. "He pulled outa here two hours ago."

"How can you tell?"

"The way the wind's smoothin' over them fresh tracks!" snorted the trader, beginning to cook another batch of cakes. "He musta found somepin' that interested him considerable or made him mad as hell from the way he's taking them curves."

"Well, let's get going!" snapped Barret.

"Not 'til I eat all I dam' please!" Jim spoke the words as if he had been waiting a long time for the opportunity. "Go on yerselves, yuh can pick me up agin on the way out, only don't wander up any of them side-fingers."

Barret and Anderson exchanged glances.

"We wouldn't think of leaving you!" Anderson answered with bluff good humor. "Eat all you kin, pardner, we ain't in any hurry."

"Glad to hear it!" the trader commented, with a sour glance at Barret.

Wing Foot edged away as cautiously as he had approached. The sight of the two white

men had infuriated him. Dodging back toward the draw, he ran upstream swift and lightly as the shadow of a summer cloud drifting across the canyon floor.

After he had eaten his fill, Jim repacked the chuck-box, strapped it leisurely onto the trunk-rack, and climbed in behind the wheel. Barret and Anderson had been waiting for him in the tonneau. The trader swung the automobile into the big tracks recently made by Walton's touring car. They whirled upstream through the draw, past the Monument and into the soft sand which had stopped their predecessors.

"Far as we go, gentlemen!" Jim announced, as the machine jerked and stopped with spinning wheels.

His companions paid no attention to him. Leaping out of the tonneau, they looked curiously about them toward the cliff-walls. At sight of the formations below the window, Barret seized Anderson's arm.

"God, look at that!" he exclaimed, excitedly, "Come on!"

"Hey, you fellows, wait fur baby!" yelled Jim, as the two white men started up the grade, "Who'n hell's guidin' this outfit, anyhow?"

Puffing at the steep climb, he followed Barret and Anderson up the loose rocks. On the window ledge, he paused to recover his breath and shout down to his companions:

"Hey, you fellers are jus' wastin' yuh breath! Thar ain't no oil down thar!"

Receiving no reply from the strangers who were already half way down, Jim reluctantly slid down the precipitous slope, and landed in a heap near the water-hole. At its margin Anderson knelt examining the oil floating on its surface. Barret stared at his companion, breaking the silence at last to whisper:

"God! We're rich!"

"Well, I'll be damned!" swore Navajo Jim, taking off his hat and hurling it in exasperation at his feet, "I been fifty years in the Canyon du Chelly—an' I had to let you two dudes discover this yere black gold mine—"

He broke off suddenly, staring at the pinon tree before him. His eyes widened, his arms went slowly up over his head. At Jim's silence, Barret and Anderson swung around. They too stared, rose to their feet, raised their hands level to their shoulder.

"Put 'em up—higher!" came a voice from behind the trunk of the pinon tree.

Eyes blazing in his haggard face, his rifle raised menacingly, the chief's son stepped forward.

"Well, if it ain't my old friend, Wing Foot," cried Jim, delightedly, "Put down that gun, sonny, we ain't gonna hurt yuh."

"What are you two doing at my oil?" the

WING FOOT REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE INDIAN RELIGION.

A Paramount Picture.

Navajo asked, turning toward Barret and Anderson.

"I brung 'em in, son, they're all right!" interposed the trader, genially, "We ain't gonna jump yer claim, 'specially seein' how yuh got it all staked ou' an' ev'rything, are we, strangers?" and he nodded to the words the Indian had written in charcoal on the flat rocks at the water-hole.

Anderson shot a quick glance at Barret. Lowering his arms, he stepped toward the Navajo.

"Of course not!" he agreed, heartily, "Maybe I could help you, Navajo—I'm from Washington and I've always been a good friend of the Indians. Have you registered it yet with the Land Office or the Interior Department?"

"He couldn't have!" Jim answered for him. "I got the only telephone er mail box in three hundred square miles an' he ain't been nigh neither."

"Fine!" exclaimed Anderson, and again his eyelids drooped in Barret's direction. "I'll show you all the ropes Injun. Here, have a cigar."

The thought flashed through Wing Foot's mind that he better shoot, the two white men were going to attack him. Then he remembered that the rifle was empty. Swinging it savagely, he caught Barret as the powerful man leaped

for him and knocked him prone. At the same moment, Anderson wrenched the stock out of his hands. Springing back, the chief's son looked toward the trader.

"You low-lived coyotes, I'll fix you!" Jim swore, drawing his old revolver from the hip pocket of his overalls and pulling the trigger.

"Dam' it, it won't go off!" he wailed helplessly to the Navajo and bent his head to examine it.

Barret leaped to his feet and looked about him. Wing Foot was fighting Anderson; the trader was working over the gun. With quick right and left blows, Barret caught Jim off his guard, and knocked him reeling back into the oil-seepage where he landed with a splash. Kicking the worthless gun out of reach, Barret sprang to the aid of his companion.

With every sense doubly alert, the Navajo squared off to meet his two adversaries. The blind tumultuous rage which had swept over him years ago in Canyon du Chelly, the bitterness of revolt which he had nursed through the lonely years at Chaco and Phoenix, all the black despair of the last six months, came now to his aid to strengthen his arm and make keener his eye. It was the Navajo's last stand, and he knew it.

To and fro, backward and forward went the uneven battle. Barret saw his opportunity and

crashed home with his right fist to the Navajo's jaw. Wing Foot reeled back and fell.

"Come on—there's a 'phone at Cheelan!" cried Anderson, breathlessly, and started to scramble up the wall again toward the window and the car beyond. Barret followed hastily after him.

When Wing Foot recovered consciousness, Jim had scrambled out of the water-hole and was sadly examining his untrustworthy revolver. He looked at the Navajo, ashamed to meet his friend's eye.

"I done this to yuh, son," he said, regretfully, "I ain't no more account than this blunderbuss o' mine."

As the dancing red flecks cleared from before his eyes, Wing Foot realized what had happened. Leaping to his feet, he started up the canyon wall after the two white men. Jim followed as fast as he could. When he caught up to his friend, Wing Foot stood alone in the dried stream-bed, looking after a cloud of dust which marked the progress of Anderson's car as it sped down the canyon.

As the dust column vanished around a curve between the towering saffron walls, the Navajo turned his flashing eyes toward the trader. Without car or pony, the chief's son had realized that he still had his winged heels and the tireless endurance of the trained Apache run-

ner. Looking up the canyon wall, he spoke quietly:

"There's still a chance, if I run across the mesa!"

"You said it, son!"

Wing Foot leaped toward the thousand-foot cliff, caught onto an overhanging rock, and swung himself up with cat-like lightness. The trader followed as best he could, but when he reached the mesa-top, the Navajo was out of sight. With a sigh, he tightened his belt and started the nine-mile hike toward home.

On the canyon floor below, Barret and Anderson were speeding forward to Cheelan as fast as their racing engine could drive them. Across hummocks of sand ridged by spring freshets they cut, and around unshapen and ghost-like pinon trees, which for years had turned their backs to the swift water and clung deep-rooted while the floods of April whirled over them and white-washed their trunks and branches every season with thicker coats of alkali. Braced behind the wheel, Barret drove, while Anderson scanned the canyon walls for familiar landmarks. As the afternoon sun dropped, the long water marks on the towering saffron walls seemed to fly past like tattered ribbons, whipping in the wind of their speed. Unnoticed by them, the copper-white sunshine of midafternoon had changed gradually into a

yellow glow. Shadows gathered in the pockets of the canyon walls, and became dusky walls of purple. The saffron line of the cliffs darkened to rose and mauve; ahead gleamed a blood-red pool, mirroring the crimson sun, which was dropping behind the cleft where the canyon ran out into the Cheelan wash.

On the rim above, Wing Foot was running exhaustedly toward the Post. Below him the canyon curved sharply and Anderson caught a glimpse of the flying figure silhouetted against the sky.

"It's the Navajo!" he yelled, gripping Barret's arm excitedly.

At the unexpected cry, Barret raised his eyes from the stream-bed to the man above. At the same moment, the car struck a hole where some Indian had dug for water and bounded into the air, hurling Anderson out. It dropped back into the depression and stuck there.

"Dam' it, you've probably broken an axle!" Barret swore savagely, as he leaped to investigate.

Anderson hurried after him. The automobile was not damaged. Putting their shoulders to the wheel, they tried to shove it out, but could not.

"Start the engine—I'll push!" puffed Anderson, breathlessly.

As he ran around the car, Barret looked up

to the canyon rim again. Black against the sunset sky, the Navajo ran tirelessly on. Pulling out his rifle, Barret took careful aim and fired.

"He's 'way out of range!" snapped Anderson. "Come along, he'll beat us in yet!"

On the rim above, Wing Foot left the canyon and turned off across the mesa. The tableland over which he ran, was aglow with sunset colors. Like beams of a mighty search light, the last sun rays came swinging up to him, back-lighted a clump of pinon, moved across a strip of yellow sand, silhouetted and turned to purple a mass of feathery sage. The chief's son caught up and ran through it to meet other wheeling rays. It made him forget his overwhelming weakness and fatigue to watch them. With his heart pounding in his breast and his lungs feeling as if they would burst, the chief's son sped on.

Far in the rear of the fleet Navajo, the blown old trader limped along. At last he could go no farther. Exhausted, he sat down on the nearest rock and mopped his aching forehead. Raising first one aching foot and then the other, he pulled off his high-heeled boots and woolen hose to examine his blistered feet. Hearing a noise behind him, he looked down the trail.

Speeding along the single track Reservation road came Walton's big touring car. Leaping

to his feet, Jim waved his red sock frenziedly. With a rush, the car approached and stopped, its brakes shrieking. Blistered feet forgotten, Jim hobbled to Walton, who was leaning out over the wheel.

"Two bad hombres are racin' Wing Foot into Cheelan to jump his oil-claim!" the trader cried, excitedly, "They hired me tuh follow yur tracks into the canyon."

"What're their names?" demanded Walton.

"Barret and Anderson—"

At Jim's words, Walton's jaw tightened dangerously. Reaching forward he released the brakes, exclaiming:

"Jump in, Jim, we've got to beat them into Cheelan to that 'phone. They're oil scavengers who've been following me for weeks to pull off this stunt!"

As Jim leaped for the tonneau, Walton started the car. In a cloud of alkali dust it went whirling down toward the canyon wash.

Half a mile ahead, Wing Foot had come to an arroyo. Hunting a place to cross, he found one, backed away and took the flying leap. He landed short of the rim, slid down the shale and fell into a heap at the bottom. As he rose, his hands went convulsively to his right ankle. The fall had strained a tendon. His face twisted with pain, he whipped off his ragged head-band and tied it tightly about the injured ankle.

Reeling with fatigue and disappointment, he climbed up the grade, and limped as fast as he could toward Cheelan.

As he struck the Reservation Trail, the Navajo heard the sound of a car behind him. Thinking it was Barret's, he dodged off the road and swung around at bay. Down the sandy tracks, Walton's big touring car came hurtling toward him. Jim had seen his friend, and was stretching out his hand from the tonneau.

"Jump on the running-board, son!" he shouted, "Them white varmints is right behind us."

As Walton swerved the lurching automobile in toward him, Wing Foot caught the trader's wrist, and flung himself on the running-board. The automobile rushed on. Wing Foot clung to the upright and looked about him. They were racing across the Cheelan wash. Whirling out of the canyon's mouth, came the touring car with Barret and Anderson. Ahead rose the Post with its dusty cottonwoods and the cluster of hogans behind it, dyed crimson in the last rays of the setting sun. On the crest of the baked brown hill above, a single rider appeared on horseback and galloped down toward the Post.

"Be ready, Navajo, to run for that 'phone!" Walton shouted above the roaring motor. "We'll hold them outside the door!"

Reaching over the wheel, Judy laid her forearm on the horn. Like a thing possessed, the siren shrieked, bringing the Navajos to the door of the Post. Others, drowsing under the cotton-woods, leaped out of sleep and stood blinking stupidly about them. Dogs barked, a burro brayed, a child cried in sudden fear. From the cluster of hogans, women and children came running, to stand and stare at the approaching automobiles.

As they swung into the yard, Walton reached for the emergency brake. With rear wheels locked, the big car skidded and lurched drunkenly, scattering the Indians in front of the store.

Far ahead of his horsemen, Jim came thundering down the hill. From the bench beside the door of the Post, Chahi rose. As Wing Foot ran past him into the store, Jim reined in his spent horse, raised his revolver and fired point blank at the Navajo's back.

"*Yat-tay,* my—" began Chahi, when he saw Jim. Knocking the chief's son out of the way, he flung himself forward and took the bullet which he saw was intended for the youth he had always loved. Clutching his heart, the old priest swayed and reeled against Wing Foot who caught and lowered him to the ground. Halfway across the yard behind Walton, the trader whipped out his gun. With a

roar the revolver went off and the Acoma Indian crumbled in his saddle.

"I got him this time!" shouted Navajo Jim, kissing his revolver-stock ecstatically. "And now fer you fellers!"

The car with Barret and Anderson came racing in from the canyon. With brakes too old to hold it, it crashed into the gasoline pump and stopped. Anderson leaped out, while Barret swung over the side.

"Put up yer hands, you oil coyotes!" screamed Navajo Jim, dancing in his excitement.

"Get outa my way—" began Barret, when the trader's second bullet pinged at his foot.

"Here, you take charge of 'em," Jim shouted, tossing his smoking gun to a cowboy who came rushing up. "Hold 'em 'till further orders."

Running across the yard to the door, he joined Wing Foot, who knelt on the threshold holding the dying medicine man in his arms. Beside them stood Walton, his quick eyes darting from the prisoners in the yard to the Navajo below him. Wing Foot looked up.

"Jim, 'phone my claim into Gallup!" he cried.

"Sure, I will!" he answered, "Come along, Walton, an' show me the ropes!"

As the white man passed, Wing Foot looked

angrily after him. Chahi moved in his arms and the chief's son bent low over the greying face.

"Wing Foot!" faltered the old priest, "You've come home?"

"Aye, my father!" answered the young Indian, reverting without thought into the speech of his childhood.

Aroused by the revolver shots, the Navajos came running to the Post from the settlement. Led by Notani, they formed a semicircle about the door, awed and silent in the presence of Death. Chahi saw them. Putting his arms under the dying man, Wing Foot raised him higher, so that he could speak.

"Hear me, my children!" Chahi cried, his voice ringing with the old authority. "Hear my last message, for now I journey to the Peaks beyond the sunset. Yet before I go, I would name the man to follow me, the one among you most worthy to wear the holy robe of the *Yebechi*—"

He paused, a spasm of pain contorting his face. Closing his eyes, he waited for it to pass and then continued:

"Three months ago, this man dared speak the truth before you all, and because I loved him as my son, I was angered, and drove him hence. Yet now I know that *Do-Atin* spoke true—"

"How do you know?" interrupted the harsh voice of Notani.

"—Because a dying one sees clear!" gasped the priest and a shudder ran through his body. Raising his eyes to Wing Foot's, he smiled tenderly.

"Once you told me," went on the feeble old voice, "that our race is run, our sun has set, unless we ourselves awaken to the new day that is breaking for the Redman. Like Atsa, the Eagle, I see you now on the heights above the dawn. My son—"

"Aye?" whispered the young Indian, and bent forward to hear the last words of the dying priest.

"Lead my people—into the sunlight!" whispered the gasping voice.

Chahi's head fell forward, dead. Wing Foot leaned forward and closed his eyes. With the tears running down his cheeks, the chief's son rose, and his hand went to his heart and outward over the medicine man's body in the ancient salute of his people. With characteristic fear of Death, the circle of watching Navajos turned swiftly away. Jim, with Walton at his heels, came running out of the door.

"It's through, son, to Washington, D. C.!" he shouted, delightedly, slapping his friend's muscular shoulder. "You're rich, boy—and

what's more, Walton's brought yuh a lil' surprise package. Look over there—"

Wing Foot swung in the direction that Jim was pointing. Corn Blossom and Judy had gotten out of the automobile and stood irresolute at the front wheel. At sight of her, the Navajo's haggard face lighted up as if the joy in his heart had suddenly shone out through his eyes.

"Corn Blossom!" he shouted, and the lovers ran to each other.

As Wing Foot's arms encircled her, the little Acoma girl's head went to his shoulder. A long embrace and then they turned to confront Notani and the Tribe, which was gathering in an indignant circle about them. The Headman stepped forward, and demanded imperiously:

"What are you doing here—with a woman from Acoma?"

"I love her!" Wing Foot answered, his voice resolute.

From the doorway where he had been listening, Walton stepped forward.

"Wait a minute, Notani," he began, quietly, "you don't quite understand. Wing Foot brings your Tribe a gift, a priceless gift—"

"That woman of our enemies?" sneered Notani.

"No—oil!"

Silence greeted Walton's words, the silence of utter astonishment. Notani stared. Then from the Navajos behind him arose a murmur, a whispering as of many voices.

"Oil—that's better than gold!"

"*Do-Atin* brings us oil?"

"Where?"

"Yesterday, in the Canyon du Chelly," continued Walton, with a quiet smile, "Wing Foot discovered oil, a rich virgin seepage near the window rock—"

"But that's on our land!" cried a voice from the rear of the circle.

"That's the gift Wing Foot brings to you," explained Walton. "By the laws of the United States which holds this land for you, half this oil is yours!"

He swung around to Wing Foot.

"Did you know this, Navajo?" he demanded. "Did you know that all oil discovered in the Navajo Backcountry goes half to the finder and half to his Tribe?"

"No, I didn't," answered the Indian.

"Well, are you satisfied?" continued Walton. "Are you willing to divide with your people?"

"My people—?" repeated Wing Foot, and looked first toward the Navajos, then down at his dusty moccasins.

"Cheelan Navajos!" exclaimed Walton and swung back toward the circle of Indians. "Is not this Wing Foot member of your Tribe?"

"*Yat-tay,* Navajo, he is our young Chief!"

The cry burst full-throated from two hundred Indians, and "*Yat-tay,* Navajo!" answered the canyon walls, and "Navajo! . . . . Navajo!" came the thin far echoes bounding back.

"Notani Nabahi!" challenged Walton, his voice seeming to silence even echoes. "Is not this Wing Foot a member of your Tribe?"

For a long minute, the cold blue eyes of the white man challenged the Navajo. Then Notani surrendered.

"Aye," he admitted, reluctantly, "he is *Do-Atin,* my first-born."

"He is the Eagle, you mean!" Walton fairly flung the proud name at the old Indian. "For what he is, and what he has done, let him be known throughout the Indian Country as Atsa the Eagle, who clings to his meat and holds it for his own!"

At the significance of the white man's words, the Navajos of Cheelan went mad for joy. They laughed, they slapped each other on the shoulders, they jumped up and down and shouted the name, until the canyon echoed and re-echoed with merry elfin voices chorusing the proud refrain:

"*Hai-yah*, the Eagle!"

"Atsa the Eagle!"

Wing Foot swung around, and stared at Walton.

"Why have you done this for me?" he faltered.

At the look on the young Navajo's face, Walton looked down in sudden embarrassment.

"Because it's my job," he explained, in a matter-of-fact tone. "I'm your new Superintendent—I'd like to be your friend."

As Wing Foot stood staring at him, the Acoma Indians whom Jim had outridden, came pounding up over the crest of the hill above the Post. As they galloped down the slope, they saw the lifeless body of their leader lying in the road beside his spent horse. Throwing himself from his pony, the War Chief bent over Jim, rose and strode with a darkening face toward Wing Foot.

"One of our women has been stolen, our leader killed!" he said, curtly. "What message shall I take to my people?"

Walton stepped aside so that his body no longer hid the inert form of the medicine man lying lifeless across the threshold of the Post.

"It is a life for a life!" he answered. "Your man shot a Navajo first and his life is forfeit."

As if he had not heard the white man, the

War Chief looked coldly at Notani, and repeated his question:

"What message shall I take back to my people—war?"

At the challenge, the Cheelan Navajos stirred angrily. Their emotions already fanned high, they jostled and pushed forward, voicing their hatred for their traditional enemies in jeering cries:

"Dead One, get back to your grave!"

"Spittle of a snake!"

Wing Foot swung impatiently toward the angry circle of his Tribesmen. Into his eyes since Walton's offer of friendship, a light had been dawning. Raising his arms, he thundered forth a single ringing word:

"Peace!"

At the imperious cry, Acoma and Navajo Indians turned unconsciously toward him. Wing Foot stood in the mellow glow following the sunset, his arms uplifted, the little Acoma girl crouching at his feet.

"The white man has many vices and one great virtue," he said, in simple English that Navajo and Acoma alike could understand. "He lives in peace and tolerance with his neighbors. And why should we who came first into this land, we who first claimed it from the Early Silence—" He paused, holding the angry factions a moment by the strength of his

indomitable will, then continued passionately:

"Why should we spend our strength in fighting one another, in ancient wars and bitterness long since dead? Let us live, too, in peace and brotherhood—we who are brothers by the common color of our skins—we who are Redmen, and proud of it!"

His racial loyalty touched, the Acoma War Chief looked keenly toward the handsome young Navajo, as he stood there before them in the flaming radiance of the sunset sky. Wing Foot took a step toward him.

"As pledge of my faith, take one more message to Acoma!" he continued, quietly, and stooping, lifted Corn Blossom gently to her feet. With his arm encircling her waist, he spoke again:

"Half of my share of the oil I give to Corn Blossom's people, that we may sit together in Council, that we may be friends. 'I give that I may receive!' "

While the significance of his words sank into the Indians' minds, Walton again moved forward, and raised his hand.

"Atsa has spoken!" he addressed the War Chief. "Take his message to your people, for he can do this, if he wishes."

The War Chief nodded, and in silence walked back to his tribesmen. Placing Jim's body across his pony, the Acoma Indians mounted

their horses, climbed the hill and rode slowly away against the pastel evening sky.

From the Post Navajo Jim came limping toward Notani. Over his arm he carried Chahi's fine old Medicine blanket which he had rescued from the sand before Yina's hogan. Stepping up to the Headman, he shook out its glowing folds and thrust them into the old Indian's hands.

"Be a good loser, Notani!" he whispered, with a significant wink toward the chief's son. "This yere Navajo republic o' Cheelan needs a change o' party, an' Wing Foot's sure the boy to do the changin'!"

THE END

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